DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 234 JC 910 479

AUTHOR O'Heron, Paul, Ed.
TITLE Center Stage: A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas. Volume 1, Numbers 1-8, 1990-91.
INSTITUTION Broome Community Coll., Binghamton, NY.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 59p.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Center Stage; v1 n1-8 1990-91

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Techniques; *College Faculty; *College Instruction; Community Colleges; *Teacher Effectiveness; *Teaching Methods; Teaching Styles; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

Designed to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of effective teaching methods, ideas, and experiences of the the faculty at Broome Community College (BCC) in New York, the first volume of "Center Stage" includes the following articles: (1) "Teaching Resources Center Update"; (2) "Self-Reflectiveness in Teaching"; (3) "New Faculty Orientation"; (4) "Faculty Rights and Responsibilities"; (5) "Paddleball at BCC"; (6) "Lecturing Well"; (7) "Moral Reasoning"; (8) the journal entries of a new teacher; (9) "The Bio-Bargain," explaining an exam strategy based on individual, oral review of exam results for score improvement; (10) "Developing My Metaphor"; (11) "Eleven Commandments for Teachers"; (12) essays by seven faculty members on their personal testing philosophies; (13) "BCC's New Teaching Resources Center"; (14) "The Freshman Experience: BCC's College 101"; (15) "Teaching the Developmental Student"; (16) advice for faculty on "The First Day" (17) "The Bio-Phone," which suggests ways to encourage students to call their teachers; (18) "Tips to Adjunct Faculty"; (19) "Doing a Course Outline"; (20) excerpts from "147 Practical Tips for Teaching Professors"; (21) essays by students and faculty on what makes a good teacher; (22) essays by eleven faculty and staff on formal and informal student advising approaches and strategies; (23) excerpts from "Total Quality Management in the Classroom"; (24) essays by five professors on the one course each thinks students should have before graduation; (25) "Improving Teaching and Learning: BCC's Interrelated Activities"; (26) "The First Steps of Success"; (27) "The College Experience," a freshman seminar; (28) "The Skill of Teaching: A Bibliography"; and (29) "Summer Reading." (PAA)

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Center Stage:
A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Volume 1, Numbers 1-8, 1990-91

Paul O'Heron
Editor

Broome Community College
Binghamton
New York

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Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 1 Number 1 *October 15, 1990*

Teaching Resources Center Update

Paul O'Heron

The idea of a TRC is moving along steadily. Committe members, as well as several faculty, are working on its design and implementation In the meanwhile, to "jump start" the TRC, several faculty are performing tasks that the TRC will later assume.

Beth Scott has completed the design of a survey of available resources that faculty would be willing to share with the TRC. Watch for the survey in the mail in the near future.

Dick Stoner is contacting deans and department chairpersons to find out how each division and department can help.

Jim Gormley coordinated a very successful new faculty orientation, and followed that up by coordinating a new faculty mentor program.

Tom Rossi is working on the space requirements for the center and coordinating the refurbishing of the TRC's temporary location on the second floor of the library.

Alice McNeely and Lynda Spickard are drafting the job specifications for the TRC staff positions, and designing

(continued on page 5)

Contents :

Self-Reflectivness in Teaching -- page 1
-- Bryan K. Blanchard

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities -- page 3
-- Summarized by Margaret Deys

Teaching Resources Center Update -- page 1
Paddleball at BCC -- page 5
-- Paul O'Heron

New Faculty Orientation Report -- page 2
-- Jim Gormley

Aside : Lecturing Well -- page 6
-- Kenneth Eble

Self-Reflectiveness in Teaching

Bryan K. Blanchard

[The following essay is adapted from an introduction to the New Faculty Orientation held on August 24, 1990.]

Some twenty years ago Neil Postman, ordinarily a canny observer of classroom activities, took to task one William O'Connor, a member of the Boston School Committee, for a remark Mr. O'Connor offered in defense of Boston's educational system: "We have no inferior education in our schools. What we have been getting lately is an inferior type of student."

Mr. Postman judged this to be semantic nonsense because he assumed that the quality of education had nothing to do with the quality of students. Indeed, thought Mr. Postman, the remark was analogous to the feeble defense of a tailor faced with a fall-off in business: "Our pant lengths are just fine," the tailor might say, "What we have been getting is too many short people."

> ... students do play a major role in the classroom process.

Years later, in another book, Mr. Postman publicly apologized to Mr. O'Connor because he eventually decided that students do play a major role in the classroom process. In effect, they influence the quality of teaching because the process is actually an interaction, a two-way street, and an exchange which obligates both parties to certain responsibilities. In this context, it is worth reflecting for a moment before you consider the strategies and techniques of teaching on the beneficiaries of your efforts, your students.

Competent observers - some who even join us and the network anchors in our very living rooms - tell us that the current generation of students was brought up in a world of instantaneous, non-historical, non-lineal visual imagery. They may be right. The implications of this assertion are several:

1. Your students may have perspectives which differ radically from yours.
2. Their attention spans may be greatly abbreviated.
3. Your attempts at influencing them may have to

(continued on page 2)

New Faculty Orientation

Jim Gormley

On Thursday afternoon, August 24, 1990, before the fall semester's classes began, a number of seasoned faculty gathered in the Learning Resources Center to present an orientation program to this year's group of new faculty. Drs. Dellow and Blanchard kicked off the orientation with some inspiring words, then withdrew to let the heavy hitters take over.

The veterans spoke on a number of topics designed to introduce the new faculty to the campus and to ease them into the first few days of classes. Presenters included: Margherita Rossi and Rachel Hinton (What It's Like To Be A New Faculty Member), Mike Costello (A Slide Show Of Prominent Campus People And Sights), Karen Goodman and Howie Herzog (How To Compose Tests), Joanne Maniago (How To Write A Syllabus), Debbie Spanfelner (How To Incorporate The Library Into Your Classes), Jim Gormley How To Deal With Problem Students), Fran Battisti (What To Do On The First Day Of Class), Steve Natale (What is the Learning Skills Center?), Margaret Deys (How to Incorporate Writing Into Your Class), and Paul O'Heron (The Teaching Center).

Representatives of the Faculty Association filled the newcomers in on contractual matters. Greta Wingate and Ed Dougherty spoke on the evaluation system and Duane Whittaker spoke on the benefits of membership.

At 5:00 p.m. all repaired to Hatters for music, food and the camaraderie of many other faculty members and administrators. All in all not a bad way to begin a new semester.

Fast Facts

The first major group to offer a mathematical plan of nature was the Pythagoreans, a school led by Pythagoras (c.585-c.500B.C.) and rooted in southern Italy. -- Kline, Morris. Mathematics, the Loss of Certainty. Oxford University Press, 1980.

James Hutton (1726-1797), a Scottish physician and gentleman farmer, is often called the father of modern Geology. He published "Theory of the Earth" circa 1785.-- Tarbuck, Edward and Lutgens, Frederick. The Earth, an Intorduction to Physical Geology. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1984.

A recent national poll shows that 52% of Americans believe our schools do an adequate job teaching basic facts and skills, but only 39% are satisfied with their results in teaching students to think and reason. -- Magnan, Robert. 147 practical tips for teaching professors. Magna Publications, Inc., 1989.

Self-Reflectiveness (from page 1)

compete with their conception of how media personalities deliver information. It's you versus Tom Brokaw.

Imagine for a moment a student whose thinking is channeled in entirely predictable ways by terms such as liberalism, conservatism, free enterprise, communism, terrorism, morality. Inasmuch as great effort has been spent in attempts at conditioning standard responses to such terms, finding a student who responds in expected ways should not be at all surprising.

So what, you might say, would be the problem? Besides the obvious communications difficulties which this stimulus-response situation implies, there is another, deeper problem: This student is living under the direction of other people's ideas. Such terms have become so clouded that they actually mask the truth for all but the most intrepid truth seekers. Thus the terms themselves have become barriers to understanding, barriers to learning and to freedom. As Francis Bacon put it almost four centuries ago, "There arises from a bad or inapt formation of words a wonderful obstruction to the mind".

> Self-reflectiveness about teaching and learning is not strongly encouraged in American academic culture.

You must confront such students and, through interaction, seek to be influential. In what ways will you choose to do it? All of us answer this question either consciously or unconsciously by the classroom practices and teaching strategies we adopt. Recognition of the role students play - here a message delivered by Postman - is a good beginning.

But as we make our choices, it is essential that we be mindful of all of the major elements of the process: 1) ourselves as teachers and our methods, 2) our students as unique individuals together with their learning capacities and strategies, and 3) the interaction we initiate and guide. Considering all these elements in light of observed outcomes is what I term self-reflectiveness in teaching.

Self-reflectiveness about teaching and learning is not strongly encouraged in American academic culture. This is puzzling because most of us are highly self-conscious of the methods used in our own disciplines. In fact, if you listen to academics debate their issues, most of the talk centers not on findings of fact but on the methods used to produce the facts and on the relationships between conclusions and observations. This contrasts sharply with the situation where in their teaching faculty focus mainly on communicating facts found by others, and hardly anyone studies the process,

(continued on page 4)

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

Robert Klingensmith
Summarized by Margaret Deys

In response to questions about faculty rights and responsibilities, the BCC Faculty Association in conjunction with the BCC Administration, invited Robert Klingensmith, NYEA Legal Counsel, to the first faculty meeting of the semester. Mr. Klingensmith emphasized that there are often no clear answers to these questions: however, faculty can protect themselves through contractual negotiations. The entire meeting was videotaped and some of the issues addressed are excerpted below:

LAWS AND CONTRACTS

Faculty do not have a contract with students. Instead their rights and responsibilities are defined by law and the contract with the college, their employer. Even though the college catalog may be interpreted as a contract between the student and the college, this does not legally impact faculty. The course outline is also not considered a contract between instructor and student but is more a statement of how the services are to be delivered. It can be a tool for keeping classroom expectations regarding attendance and classroom decorum up front for the students and warding off problems. Some faculty even have students sign a form at the beginning of the semester, declaring their knowledge about classroom expectations. This is up to the individual instructor. In issues involving dangerous students or threats to the integrity of academic processes, faculty are advised to prevent problems from occurring through contractual negotiations. Society has changed its orientation from a "teacher is always right" stand to a consumer orientation where the "customer (student) is always right." This has changed the expectations of both faculty and students. Faculty cannot use grades as a power weapon concerning nonacademic matters. A student's redress is the grievance procedure.

PERB

The Public Employment Relations Board mediates discrepancies between faculty and the college. PERB defines what contracts address: mandatory topics, those that must be addressed, and nonmandatory topics, those that may be but don't have to be addressed in the contract. Nonmandatory topics could include issues of classroom safety, student discipline and maintenance of academic integrity. However, these issues must clearly arise from the relationship between the college and faculty. For example, if the mission of the college is open admissions, and this includes dangerous students in the classroom, then safety measures are negotiable issues.

COLLEGE PRACTICES

Practices are the fill in the blank actions that occur over time and cover issues not spelled out in the contract. The student handbook spells out expected student conduct. This can be built in as part of practice. Theoretically, faculty can't be disciplined for following through on something that is expected practice. If administration doesn't follow through with spelled out practices, a complaint can be filed with PERB to make them follow through. Practical advise is to foresee problems and ward them off ahead of time through negotiations and shifting the decision making problems to the administration or Board of Trustees.

LIABILITY

Questions about liability to students are difficult to answer and depend a lot on the individual circumstances. Often the only way to find out is to test through the courts. It seems clear that faculty are not obligated to physically protect students and are not acting in loco parentis, as elementary and secondary teachers are. If a faculty member physically intervened between students, the employer could be held liable. Faculty can sue or be sued for libel and slander. Certain terminology needs to be couched or used only in professional contexts in order to be safe. Faculty can always file criminal charges against students or file civil suits. However, these procedures are the same as for any other citizen and are time-consuming and costly. In terms of classroom obligations, instructors probably do not have the right to refuse to teach classes with disruptive students, but do have the right to leave and call security for assistance in removing dangerous individuals who may refuse to leave. Liability of the internships is also unclear. Jo Anne Maniago added that she uses a field trip form for students who will be covered by the county insurance policy and Mr. Klingensmith referred to this as a mechanism already in place that could be used by others.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT CHARGES

Faculty rights regarding student complaints about racial discrimination or sexual harassment are also unclear but may be negotiable issues. Questions about whether faculty must be made aware of complaints or any paperwork regarding these complaints need to be explored. Faculty have no rights regarding this under the law and nontenured faculty generally have less protection than tenured under the contract. However, if the administration takes disciplinary action, faculty must be made aware of the charge. According to the contract, faculty have the right to inspect their personnel files.

Perry Mason turned. "Circumstantial evidence is the best evidence there is, Paul. You just have to interpret it properly." -- Erle Stanley Gardner, The Case of the Queenly Contestant

Self-Relectiveness (from page 2)

much less draws conclusions based on systematic observation.

All of us get caught up in the teaching process, and when we do, it is very difficult to step aside of it and examine what is happening. Too, self-reflectiveness is discouraged by a host of traditions, understandings, and habits:

- our reliance on authority in our treatment of students.
- the amount of material we feel we must cover or which others say we must cover.
- the ritualized ways in which schools operate or in which we believe they must operate.
- the tendency of teachers like all professionals to mystify what they do.
- the deep dependency of students who do not want to assume responsibility for their own learning and who do not want to challenge our authority.
- our development of testing methods which give the appearance of student learning and which cover up student deficiencies.
- the reluctance of either of the parties to the teaching-learning process to admit ignorance.
- our acceptance of over-generalized learning theories and our habit of taking them at face value.
- our own reluctance to question ourselves or to question the methods once used on us or now used by our colleagues.

The list could actually be made much longer than what is suggested here. And it is complicated still further by the fashion among faculty to disdain discussion of methods as topics suitable only to educationists and grade school teachers. Unfortunately, all this leaves the contemporary college teacher quite alone with his situation, with the only real hope being that as solitary actors we can all become effective critics of our approaches and that we can teach ourselves how to teach.

The good news is that I think we can. Once we have a useful model in mind, we can examine the elements individually and assess their relative contributions to the results, that is to how well students learn. The model which relates teachers and methods to students and their capacities, through interaction, while quite simplistic and open to numerous criticisms, is still sufficient to the task of improving individual teaching efforts. It gives us a place to start and the means for integrating our ideas and our observations.

For starters, you might begin self-reflection by considering metaphors[1] because whether we are aware of their influence or not, they often affect how we think of ourselves as teachers and how we treat students. What is your metaphorical conception of the human mind and does it affect your teaching? Do you believe the mind is a dark cavern (to be lit), an empty vessel (to be filled), a muscle (to be exercised)? Is it a clock similar to the machines which once modeled the universe? Is the mind a computer (to be programmed)? A garden (to be tended)? A lump of clay (to be molded)? Do people learn the way rats learn? And what metaphors do you apply to schools? Prisons? Armies? Hospitals? Courts? Churches? Extensions of the home or family? Fraternities and sororities? Each of these metaphors has its implications and often they are visible in the treatment of students as sons or daughters, as troops, as inmates, as patients. There really are teachers who are toughening up students, making survivors of students, or helping students find some sort of salvation.

But self-reflectiveness only begins with the identification of metaphors. As noted, productive analysis depends on clear recognition of each of the elements of the process and full appreciation of the meaning of the rich interaction between teacher and students. It also presupposes faculty willingness to question their own roles and to seek information on the results of the process. Indeed, whetting further the professoriate's appetite for evidence on its effectiveness ought to be the primary challenge of everyone concerned with professional development.

> We need to be conscious of what contributes to effective teaching and learning.

What is really needed in American higher education is a new ethic - or perhaps a renewed ethic - congruent with recent emphases in other areas of our national life and based on our deep desire to be of utmost service to students. We need to be conscious of what contributes to effective teaching and learning, and we need to constantly test our understandings against the results of our efforts. In this way, colleges and universities may enlist in the national Excellence Movement begun by visionaries such as W. Edwards Deming and strive to constantly improve the quality of the service they provide. Almost a century ago, John Dewey issued this same call under the rubric "action research." Today, his message is being echoed by K. Patricia Cross and her encouragement of "classroom research". I believe our campus should heed the call and be energized by it.

The idea of classroom research is not that teachers will all become educational researchers and produce a mammoth new literature on effective teaching. No one would rule that out, of course, but the aim is not so grandi-

(continued on page 5)

[1] Again, I am indebted to Neil Postman for suggesting this approach and providing these examples. It is his opinion that, "In a fundamental sense, all arguments about how education ought to be conducted are arguments about the validity of competing metaphors."

Self-Reflectiveness (from page 4)

ose. Rather, the idea is to enable teachers to keep close track of how well their own students are doing so that fresh feedback can be used to improve their own teaching efforts. Why this is important goes back to the observation that our academic culture leaves us each pretty much alone in learning how to teach. As Cross says,

> Teaching as art or science or voodoo is in an essentially primitive state of development. We are not standing on the shoulders of giants in advancing knowledge and improving practice with each generation of teachers. It is a fairly good guess that teachers coming out of graduate schools today are not doing any better job of teaching than those graduating 50 years ago. That is not to say that their field of study hasn't made advances; it is simply to recognize that each young teacher starts from the beginning to learn how to teach. It is time to make college teaching a profession - a profession that is growing and improving over the decades as well as one that has the potential for continuous self-renewal for individual teachers.

And the way to do that is to show teachers how to devise their own means of studying the impact of their methods on their students. The questions they need to address, says Cross, are these:

- How does what I do as a teacher affect what my students learn?
- How can I monitor, throughout the semester, how effectively students are learning what I am trying to teach?
- How can I get the kind of feedback about my teaching that will help me grow and develop as a teacher?
- How can I become a more systematic and sensitive observer of the learning process?

> How can I get the kind of feedback about my teaching that will help me grow and develop as a teacher?

In a curious way, then, teaching methods become more important to the teaching-learning process after you adopt them. Cross' questions point this up: Once methods are selected, they become not only our vehicles for encouraging and enhancing learning but they become candidates for research themselves. They cease to be abstract and static and they become dynamic. Do they work? Can they be made to work better? These questions are key to self-reflectiveness in teaching. They lead teachers to modify, to tinker, or to junk. But informed choice depends on feedback, as well as on knowing as much as possible about yourself and your students.

References:

1. Cross, K. Patricia. Making Teaching More Effective. Journal of the Freshman Year Experience, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1990
2. Cross, K. Patricia and Thomas A. Angelo. Faculty Members as Classroom Researchers: Progress Report. Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal. April-May 1989.
3. Postman, Neil. Teaching as a Conserving Activity. New York: Delacorte Press, 1979.

Teaching Resources Center (from page 1)

a process for selecting the people to fill those positions.

Francis Battisti, Paul O'Heron and Jim Antonakos are discussing the way the TRC will fit into the current college governance structure.

Other committe members are: Mary Dickson, Pat Franks, Aggie Vallone, Jim Baker, Margaret Deys, Margherita Rossi, and Denise Abrams. More information will be forthcoming in the next issue. If you'd like to comment or ask questions, contact one of the people mentioned above.

Paddleball at BCC

Paul O'Heron

I was playing paddleball with a friend of mine when our game was interrupted by her two children. While my friend discussed "secrets" with her five year old son, I chatted with her seven year old daughter.

"We learned how to add in school today", she offered.

"Oh, yeah?", I replied. " How big were your answers?"

"Not too big."

"How high can you count?", I asked.

"I can count to infinity", she boasted.

"You can?" I was amazed. "How long does it take for you to count to infinity? Doesn't that take a long time?"

"Yes", she answered seriously, "All the way from Endicott to Johnson City."

"But," she continued, "I can count even higher."

"Even higher?", I gasped.

"I can count to infinity plus twenty," she hesitated, "but that takes all the way from Endicott to BCC."

Aside

One of the policies of Center Stage will be to present articles on teaching and teaching style. We do not wish to be didactic, but instead we hope each article gives you something to discuss. We welcome your opinions (pro or con) of the articles we select.

The following article is excerpted from The Craft of Teaching, by Kenneth E. Eble, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988.

Lecturing Well

How does one lecture well? I have not often let myself be pinned down on this question, both because I distrust the lecture as a generally effective form of instruction and I distrust myself whenever I am tempted to say, "This is the way to do it." Nevertheless, lecturing well is certainly preferable to lecturing poorly, and there are some teachers who may be served by undisguised "how-to" advice. Asking only that the reader recognize the limitations of simple, direct answers, the following points are the ones most important to lecturing well.

First, fit the material to the time at your disposal. Restrict your aim to less than a handful of primary topics and consider specific ways of engaging the audience in each one. Do not elaborate overly much nor introduce important matters that leave the audience gasping for particulars. Conduct your scholarly arguments and pursue your peculiar obsessions in places other than the lecture.

Second, seek hard and unrelentingly for precise examples and illustrations and for ways of breaking up a single presentational mode. Take advantage of physical presence and movement, and employ the blackboard and other such devices.

Third, begin by stimulating the interest of the audience. Alluding to the personal or to the world outside, arousing curiosity, providing surprise, and using casual humor are some of the ways of enhancing beginnings. What might work for an opening day of class may not work the day after a tough exam. Sensitivity to the mood of the class and a variety of ways of responding to that mood increase the chance of involving an audience day after day.

Fourth, in following the sketch that comes from advance preparation, develop an ability to improvise and to sustain an improvisational quality even in carefully structured presentations.

Fifth, provide the audience with frequent breathing spaces and opportunities for questions. Better to talk too little and stop short than to go on too long.

Sixth, provide an ending for every lecture but maintain a continuity with what has gone before and what lies ahead.

Seventh, develop and use a range of voice, gestures, and physical movement that is appropriate to your style, to the material, and to the occasion and that reinforces content, fixes attention, and stimulates an audience. Listen to yourself and root out mannerisms and affectations.

Eighth, be guided by the living audience and the most pressing need of striking up discourse with as many as possible. You are both host and guest.

Hello, World.

Welcome to the first issue of Center Stage, a forum for the presentation and discussion of the effective teaching methods practiced, ideas held, and stories lived by the faculty at Broome Community College.

The editors and reviewers of Center Stage hope that this issue and further issues lead to a healthy discussion of what good teaching is all about, and how we all try to practice it. In that spirit, Center Stage encourages all its readers to submit for publication: ideas for articles, entertaining classroom experiences, responses to printed articles and/or personal beliefs on what good teachers do. This newsletter will be as good as the input it receives from its readers. And with the enthusiasm put out by the faculty at BCC, we envision a very successful, long term existence.

How to Contact Us

Send all correspondence to :

Paul O'Heron -- Mathematics Dept.
Office : T-215 Phone : 771-5128
EMail : OHERON_P (All-in-One)

Coming Up Next Issue

Morality in the Classroom
-- Paul Chambers

T+1 Months and Not Counting
-- Greg Sliwa

Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 1 Number 2 *November 15, 1990*

Moral Reasoning

Paul Chambers

One of Moliere's characters, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, was delighted to discover, upon taking up learning at an advanced age, that he had been speaking "prose" all his life. What prose was to Moliere's character, moral reasoning should be to our students. "Ethics," or "moral reasoning," is systematic thinking about right and wrong, good and evil. Ethical presuppositions are built into any decision humans make about the right thing to do, or the right judgement on someone else's action.

Seven outcomes to our general education program are stated in the catalog. Two of these are:

a) think clearly and critically, and
b) become sensitive to the ethical dilemmas of daily life and experienced in moral reasoning and discourse.

Every graduate is expected to have these two abilities after being educated at BCC. These two abilities are related. Moral reasoning is a specific type of critical thinking. Critical thinking requires recognizing conclusions and providing the evidence on which these conclusions are based;

(Continued on page 4)

Contents :

Moral Reasoning
by Paul Chambers, page 1

T+1 Months and Not Counting
by Greg Sliwa, page 1

The Bio-Bargain
by Rick Firenze, page 3

Letter to the Editor, page 5
Delivering My Metaphor
by Margaret Deys

Aside, page 6
Eleven Commandments for Teachers
by Hugh Skilling

T+1 Months and Not Counting

Greg Sliwa

Late last year, for a number of reasons, I was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with my job as a mathematical statistician for the Bureau of the Census in suburban Washington, D.C. So, after 15 years of government service, I decided it was time to look for another job.

I had recently taught a statistical methods course at the Census Bureau to a group of mid-level managers from statistical agencies of various developing countries in Africa and Asia. That was my first formal class since my graduate school days as a teaching assistant. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and it rekindled my interest in teaching. Over the years, I had also tutored individuals in elementary statistics and mathematics courses. In particular, I recently tutored one girl in Calculus. Although I hadn't taken Calculus in over 20 years and had no exposure to it at the Bureau, I managed to get the girl through the course.

With that impetus, I found the courage to apply for positions in Mathematics departments at community colleges and small 4-year colleges. After numerous letters and applications, I accepted a position at BCC and on August 17 I unofficially resigned from the Census Bureau. The next day my family and I, with the help of a cousin and friends, loaded all our belongings onto a rental truck, drove from Washington to Owego and unloaded everything into a home we hadn't yet gone to settlement on. Less than 30 hours later, I began my life at Broome.

Monday, August 20

I am sitting behind a table in the Baldwin Gym, a new teacher, trying to learn the ropes of registration. Tally sheets, placement test results, catalogue prerequisites, drop/add forms, on-line registration. The Math department is moving and exactly where my office will be has not been decided. In the afternoon, I find an open classroom and start preparing for my classes next week.

Later that day, we settle on our new home in Owego and celebrate by going out for a nice dinner. Phew! I made it through the first day.

Tuesday, August 21

New personnel orientation in downtown Binghamton. How long is this thing going to take? Isn't there anywhere

(Continued on page 2)

T+1 and Counting (from page 1)

to park near the county building? I throw a few quarters in the meter and park down and over a couple streets. Typical personnel meeting: Forms, forms, forms, pictures! I'm out of here.

Still no office at school. I do a little work in an open class and decide to go home and cut the grass.

Wednesday, August 22

No office! No mailbox! Why does the Math department have to move? I think the AT building is just fine.

It's getting to be a pain lugging all my textbooks, solutions manuals, course booklets and other materials everywhere I go on campus, using any open class as an office. Initially, I'm trying to do things my own way, in so far as preparing for my classes, but time is getting short, and I'm not getting much done. I decide to follow the course policies, objectives and assignment sheets of others who recently taught the courses I've been assigned.

In the afternoon I'm told I'll be teaching Basic College Math instead of Introductory Algebra. I don't need this kind of change right now.

I help two faculty members pack for their move into their new offices.

Thursday, August 23

Faculty meeting - the talk by the NEA lawyer is an eye-opener. I'm really unprepared to tackle such problems. The faculty luncheon that follows is very enjoyable. I meet some people from other departments. Everybody's extremely nice.

Still no office! New faculty orientation that afternoon. The talks on dealing with problem students are somewhat unexpected.

Friday, August 24

No office, no desk! I'm assured that everything will be OK'd and ready this afternoon. I help another faculty member pack. With all the packing at school and unpacking at home, I feel more qualified to be a mover than a teacher.

Division meeting, department meeting, meeting with other faculty teaching Basic Math.

Finally at 2:00 pm, an office in Titchener 215, a desk, and yes, even a chair! I do a little work, look at my schedule, and decide to check out my classrooms before I leave. I can't find my Basic Math class in the Business building. No such room exists. I ask a secretary. Oops! I misread my schedule. It's section 17 in room 45, not section 45 in room 17. I'm embarrassed. I'm sure glad this week is almost over!

The campus personnel office called earlier in the afternoon. Seems there is a problem with the picture for my ID, and I'll have to return at my own convenience for another. On my may home I decide to stop, but the photographer left early.

Did I make the right move - leaving the security of my Census position? Things will settle down on Monday once class start. I think.

Monday, August 27

I can't wait for classes to start. My first class is Basic Math in the Business building at 8:00. I'm in the office at 7:00, doing some last minute preparations. A little nervous and excited, I need to stop by the rest room in Titchener. Our secretary tells me it's downstairs. I race into the first rest room I see. On my way out, I meet another person coming in; she points at the sign. I shrug my shoulders and make some lame excuse. I hope she's not one of my students.

I go to my first class and find she isn't. God is with me on this one.

I was reading something recently (Innovation Abstracts, Volume XII, Number 17 - ed.) that suggested using a scavenger hunt as a means of introducing new faculty members to their campus. Should Broome adopt such a policy, I'd recommend placing rest rooms at the top of the list.

When I arrive at my first class the room is locked. Ten minutes later, after two master keys fail, we're in. The head of the Business division had a key.

At my first meeting with my evening algebra class, one student is particularly boisterous. During the break, I can sense many of the students talking and wondering how I will handle the situation. I decide to wait and talk with my colleagues. Things have to get better. I hope.

Tuesday, August 28

My mentor (an assigned faculty member in the Math department) suggests that I speak to the loud student in algebra during break if the behavior persists.

One student in my afternoon statistics class walks off with my text. Nobody in our department could ever recall such an incident. I really must be looking foolish.

Wednesday, August 29

That person in evening algebra class calms down somewhat. I decide not to confront the individual.

Thursday, August 30

Locked out of Basic Math, again! Luckily, a chairper-

(Continued on page 4)

The Bio-Bargain

Rick Firenze

"Learn from your mistakes." As educators we often extol this virtue, but with equal frequency this extolation is but meaningless lip-service. In many classes students are given very little opportunity and virtually no incentive to actually learn from the mistakes they have made on exams.

I'm sure as educators we all agree that exams should be a learning device as well as an evaluatory tool. But how best to accomplish this goal in today's assembly line educational institution?

The fact is, most seasoned instructors have long ago given up the pedagogical tool of reviewing exams after they have been returned to the student. Mostly they have done so for good reasons. When done in the typical classroom situation it is, for the most part, educationally useless. Students benefit little, if at all, and precious instructional time is wasted.

What makes this type of review a useless endeavor are two basic realities which stare those of us involved in teaching square in the face.

First and foremost, the student is neither being rewarded nor learning anything concrete from this impersonal review. What's in it for them? Oh, sure they will now know the answer to question six was B not C, but what good does that do them now? Do they really understand the concept any better? Do they really care? No! Let's face it, most students are interested in "Wadjaget", not "Wadjalearn".

Second, we may not like or agree with it, but the great motivating factors for many of our students are alcohol, sex, money and grades (not necessarily in that order). For us to use the first would be illegal, the second immoral, and the third out of the question (most of our salaries are far too low to pay our students to learn). The fourth however is neither illegal, immoral or expensive. In fact, if used properly, it can be an enticing method to motivate students to learn important conceptual ideas using Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).

In an effort to reward students with grades while "forcing" them to think critically, I have developed what may be one of my most successful pedagogical tools: THE BIO-BARGAIN.

What follows is a brief explanation of this device including some of the rationale for its use.

Exam papers are graded and returned within two days. Let's keep in mind all educational research indicates the importance of prompt feedback. The student is given one week to review his/her exam, discover the errors, correct them and most importantly understand them. The student is warned and will learn very quickly that memorization in the BIO-BARGAIN situation is quite useless. They will then sign up for a 30 minute block of time to come to my office or my home to "review" their exam. During this session the student must demonstrate by means of an oral mini-exam that they have a true understanding of the material they have faulted on. If they indeed demonstrate this ability I will split the difference between their present grade and the highest score achieved on the exam.

Example:

Original Grade	= 60
Highest Grade Achieved	= 96
Possible BIO-BARGAIN Points	= 18
Possible New Grade	= 78

Few students achieve a perfect BIO-BARGAIN and of course partial credit is given. No student ever walked out of the session feeling it was an easy way to raise their grade. But virtually all students feel it was a worthwhile learning experience.

As I see it the BIO-BARGAIN has several pedagogical advantages:

First it not only allows the students to learn from their mistakes, it actually rewards them for doing so. The exam becomes a learning experience not a punitive one. This in itself greatly enhances their true comprehension of the subject matter. This can be partially illustrated by the fact that students who participate in BIO-BARGAIN sessions average 22% higher scores on comprehensive final exams than those who choose to forego this opportunity.

Second, it allows me to get to know my students on a more personal level. I begin to appreciate their individual strengths, weaknesses and apprehensions. I discover details about their life which allows me to show more concern for them as a human being as well as a student.

Third, it allows my students to get to know me on a more personal level. I am no longer the "didactic dude" who shows up three times a week to tell them what life is all about (remember I teach Biology). They find in me a human being who shares strengths, weaknesses and apprehensions, many of them the same as their own. Students begin to feel more comfortable both in and out of the classroom situation. The number of "in class" questions increases dramatically after the BIO-BARGAINS begin (320% on average). The number of "at home" telephone calls from students increases 417%.

In short both student-instructor and student-institu-

(Continued on page 4)

Morality (from page 1)

moral reasoning requires conclusions about human actions being right or wrong and the evidence to support those conclusions. When an educated person judges an action to be wrong, one should be able to explain both to oneself and to others the premises (i.e., reasons or evidence) for those conclusions. The premises support the conclusion in a valid logical argument.

While moral reasoning is formally taught in PHI 201 Ethics, ENG 220 Communicating About Values, SOS 111 Public Affairs, SOS 120 Science, Technology and Society, SOS 130 Man, Technology and Environment and PHI 208 Humanities and Technology, we all have the opportunity to teach moral reasoning in our classes. As we distribute our course outlines, we state our policy on make-up examinations. If we also take time to explain why we have this policy, we are doing moral reasoning. Our policy is our conclusion about what is right; our explanation for it states the premises.

> Teachers everywhere should teach moral reasoning.

In addition to course policies, in most courses it is possible to discuss moral reasoning about the subject matter:

In the health science programs, moral reasoning is such a part of the practices in the medical field that it is easy to infuse moral reasoning. "Right to Die" and "Do Not Resuscitate" laws force professionals to make ethical decisions.

In business law, laws are the product of a consensus in moral reasoning by legislators, so ethics produces laws. Thus, it would be easy to discuss moral reasoning in that course.

Love Canal gave us an example of ethics in Chemistry. The officials of Hooker Chemical knew the chemicals were toxic, even if law did not prohibit their actions at the time.

With creativity I am sure faculty could infuse moral reasoning in all courses on campus. This is the goal. It is hoped, requested, and urged that all faculty infuse moral reasoning into their courses as occasions permit.

Our students need moral reasoning in their personal and professional lives. Completing tax forms honestly, not cheating in the classroom, and assuming responsibilities as a citizen are all personal ethical decisions. Likewise, most professions have a formal statement of ethics that present the expectations of behavior in that occupation. As thinking adults our students should be able to explain their moral conclusions that life forces them to make.

Teachers everywhere should teach moral reasoning. As faculty at BCC we can help satisfy this educational goal that has been accepted as one of the educational outcomes for students in all curricula, and simultaneously enrich our students' lives with our efforts. □□

Bio-Bargain (from page 3)

tion bonding is greatly enhanced. We just feel more comfortable with each other.

BIO-BARGAINS are both time consuming and demanding. They are at times both emotionally and physically draining. But I'm sure for those who use them now (the English Dept. has of course been doing this from day one - remember rough drafts?) or those who will try them in the future, the realization will be ..... they are more than worth the time and the effort. Coupled with the BIO-PHONE it can be a strong educational tool to encourage our students to think about and analyze the subject at hand.

What's that?? What's a BIO-PHONE? HOLY PEDAGOGY PROF!! That's a story for another column.

Editor's note: This is a summary of a major article being submitted to NABT Journal. For further details please see Mr. Firenze, Biology Department, office - F109, phone 771-5067. □□

T+1 and Counting (from page 2)

son in the next office is in and has a key.

I recover my stat text that afternoon.

Friday, August 31

Lock out number three in Basic Math. No division dean, no chairpersons. Call security, call maintenance. 15 minutes later, we're in.

Thank goodness this week is over! I need a rest. It's off to relatives in Western New York for the Labor Day weekend.

The next three weeks are quite uneventful. The noisy person in my evening algebra was never seen again. I return to the county building for the retake of my ID picture and am told that nothing is wrong with the original, the only thing needed was my signature. It is comforting to see that the bureaucracy of government works similarly at the county level as at the federal level.

(Continued on page 6)

Letters to the Editor

Delivering My Metaphor

Margaret Deys

Something VPAA Bryan Blanchard said at the beginning of the semester during new faculty orientation stuck in my mind, something about the metaphors we use to describe teaching and learning. I have tried to think about my own metaphor from time to time, while driving to campus in the morning, or between classes while watching the leaves change. But, I was stuck.

I pushed harder when I read the written version of Dr. Blanchard's message, "Self-Reflectiveness in Teaching" in the October 15 issue of Center Stage. I found that I could focus better on the written version, so I spent an office hour pondering some of the essay's suggested metaphors for the human brain. I knew right off that I rejected the notion of the human mind as an empty vessel to be filled. Although part of learning is acquiring information, students' heads are not empty, and a mind poured full of facts and information does not ensure thinking. What about the mind as a muscle? Maybe in some ways it needs to be exercised; at least it implies action and minds do need to be used. But, that's not it. Though exercise may sometimes be healthy, I smell the residue of repetitive frontal lobe curls. Likewise, metaphors about clocks and computers are too mechanistic for my taste; no magic. A dark cavern to be lit sounds interesting, like an awakening, a revelation. But I can hear an echo and it's the teacher's voice and it sounds like the teacher is building the fire. How about a garden to be tended, with a teacher pruning and supplying the necessary nutrients for growth? Well, it keeps the gardener busy, but what is the plant doing besides developing from its seed, hanging out waiting for the bees and flowering? I grew weary waiting for my metaphor, the one that really felt right.

A week or so later, Rebecca Bennett mentioned the metaphor concept to me again at the end of our day together in the office. This time, while I stopped typing to listen to her, I didn't even try, and finally it hit me!

"A birth metaphor!" I rudely blurted out in the middle of Rebecca's sentence.

"What?"

"I'm sorry. I've been trying to discover my metaphor for weeks! It's like giving birth!"

"That's interesting. Is the mind the baby or the mother?"

"The mother."

That felt right. And so our collaboration began. I was in labor and she was helping me.

"The human mind as mother giving birth. The birthing process like the learning process as exhilarating, painful, rewarding and frightening. Requiring collaboration. The process as unpredictable and full of surprises. Requiring collaboration, at least for conception. Birthing as a natural and universal process though unique to each individual. Knowledge as a baby, a creation. The human mind creating knowledge. And once the idea/child is born, the miraculous potential for its own growth and reproduction. A nurtured, well-developed adult idea able to stand on its own in the world of ideas. Real life."

I felt satisfied.

> The more I think about this birth metaphor, the more I like its implications about the roles of the learner and the teacher.

The more I think about this birth metaphor, the more I like its implications about the roles of the learner and the teacher. The learner is primary, at center stage, fully engaged in the creative process. The teacher is off to the side, acting as collaborator, guide and coach. I guess that likens the teacher to a midwife.

I now realize that I owe the conception of this metaphor to a freshman composition student from a couple of semesters ago. She was a student who seriously applied herself to her studies. Not only did she want to earn good grades, she also wanted to learn. She approached me one day at the beginning of class, distraught because she had somehow lost a file containing her paper on a computer disk while finishing her editing. I advised her not to give up hope, but to contact someone in the computer lab who could sometimes find lost files. She did and when she recovered her essay, she told me something I will never forget. She was not distraught because she feared the extra work in rewriting her paper or the ramifications of handing it in late. She said she felt as if she had left her baby at daycare, and when she returned to retrieve him, he was gone. When she lost her essay, she felt as if she had lost her baby. This student felt she had truly created something important and special in her paper.

I want to thank this special student for the conception, and I want to thank Rebecca and Bryan for helping me deliver my metaphor. □□

Fast Fact

The first community college teaching resources center in California, and possibly the nation, at American River College is celebrating its tenth anniversary. -- Community College Week, October 29, 1990.

Aside

The following article was excerpted from Do you teach? views on college teaching, Hugh H. Skilling. Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1969.

Eleven Commandments For Teachers

The good teacher likes his students and enjoys helping them, understanding their thoughts and feelings. You should:

1. Remember the students whom you teach, for they alone are the measure of your success.

2. Forget yourself, for your own excellence is good only as it helps your students.

3. Consider the purpose of your teaching, and show the student a goal as far ahead as you both can see.

4. Accept him as he is and improve him as you can; the student is guided by intellect but driven by emotion -- to complain is futile, and to ignore his motivation is to fail.

5. Show him the real world of fact for interest and the ideal world of theory for understanding, each illuminating the other.

6. Relate new thoughts to what the student knows, for this is how he learns; lead him from the known to the unknown.

7. Repeat and repeat, yet never the same; let each idea be seen three times in different lights.

8. Let the student work, for work is remembered long after words are forgotten. Hearing is weak, seeing is better, doing is best.

9. Let the student seek, lead him to discoveries of his own and these will be his choicest jewels of knowledge.

10. Provide light and air and quiet, for all your work is lost if attention fails.

11. Know thoroughly the subject that you teach, and where it leads; present it with interest and enthusiasm. □□

T+1 and Counting (from page 2)

Could things be changing for the better? Those first two weeks were just a test, and I passed. I hope! I hope!

Friday, September 21

It's time to give my day algebra class their first exam. I schedule it the day I have to be back in Washington to officially resign my government post. Another faculty member has agreed to proctor the exam, and Saturday on my way back from D.C., I'll stop by the office to pick up the papers. I'll plan to grade it on Sunday.

Saturday, September 22

Late, after driving 5+ hours, I pull into Broome to pick up the exam. My two young boys pile out, eagerly awaiting their first look at Daddy's new office. I open the outside door to Titchener, and my key becomes stuck in the door. One hour later (I won't go into the details), someone from Security breaks the key off in the door. I pick up my exams and head home to Owego. Halfway home, I realize that I have left the answers to the exam in my office. No way am I returning to get them. I'll simply spend an extra half hour on Sunday re-working them.

As things turn out, I end up giving half the exam (similar but not the same questions) over to most of the class. The original exam was on the front and back of one sheet of paper. I never thought of having the proctor mention that to the class. Four students only worked the front page.

Did I make the right decision coming to Broome? I realize now that I'll probably have many more experiences like the one I've described. Hopefully, they won't occur in such a compressed time scale, but its experiences like these that add variety to teaching and life that make both interesting. I certainly did make the right decision, and I'm happy with it.

P.S. If anyone's planning on moving to the D.C. area, I still have a beautiful home for sale. □□

Coming Next Issue

The next issue will be devoted to testing philosophy. Michael Costello, Karen Goodman, Ben Kasper, Margaret LoGalbo, Margherita Rossi, Fran Short and Janet Wright will be our guest writers.

Center Stage is published monthly in cooperation with the Professional Development Committee.

Send all correspondence to the editor:

Paul O'Heron
Mathematics Department, T-215
Phone : 771-5128
E-Mail : OHERON_P (All-in-One)

Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 1 Number 3 *December 15, 1990*

Testing Philosophy

I was sitting in my office a few weeks ago wondering how I fit into my students' concept of college. How do my students view me as "the teacher"? I decided that my students see me and my fellow teachers as having two major roles in the educational setting. One is to be a channel through which they can gain some of the knowledge, insight, and critical thinking necessary for a successful life. The other is to be the assessor of how well they are receiving and utilizing this knowledge. Both are ripe for discussions on how we can best perform in each role. For this issue, dated just before final exams, I decided to focus on testing. As you will read in this single topic issue, the methods we choose for testing are varied, yet common; the motivations, however, are quite disparate personal decisions.

I thank each of our contributors for their time and willingness to share this peek into their thoughts on what we mean by "testing". In the process of reading the articles and discussing positions with some of the writers, I have learned a lot. I also have a lot more questions than two weeks ago. I hope you can use the philosophies presented here as a basis for self-reflection on your own philosophy, and as a starting point for discussion in what a good testing philosophy should be. -- ed.

Contents :

Testing Philosophy

-- Michael Costello, page 1

-- Karen Goodman, page 2

-- Ben Kasper, page 2

-- Margaret LoGalbo, page 3

-- Margherita Rossi, page 4

-- Francis Short, page 5

-- Janet Wright, page 6

Michael Costello
Chemistry Department

In responding to the question "How do you test?", I am reminded of the old adage by A.S. Neill, "Why Test?" This generally crosses my mind whenever I prepare an exam. However, because of the requirements (or is it responsibilities) of academia, I begin the task. Format is the first issue addressed by this "tester". In an effort to allow my students the ability to illustrate their comprehension of the material covered, I vary the format throughout the exam.

Each exam consists of three types of questions:

1) Multiple Choice - difficult to create, easy to grade. Prepares students for future formalized testing. (Remember those GREs, MCATs, LSATs, etc.?). I usually make my own, but may borrow from American Chemical Society Sources.

2) True-False - difficult to create (is there ever a truism?), easy to grade and gives students a fifty-fifty chance per question.

3) Essay (yes, even in scientific disciplines) and/or open ended problems with a variety of choices that allow students time to illustrate their creativity. Obviously, more difficult to grade but presents the tester an opportunity to reward effort for the correct thought process even if the correct answer is not attained. In terms of grading, these questions are akin to your worst nightmare, but at times, student's presentations provide you with some levity. When they have no conceivable answer, their "modus operandi" turns to creating/developing a scientific fact that can be attested to through their own contrived experiments (Remember Cold Fusion?).

> If a questions is missed by 90% of the respondents, I have failed miserably.

Second, in assessing the degree of difficulty of the exam (as well as the individual questions), this is gauged by not my prognostication, but by how the students respond. This is the ultimate dichotomy. I believe at this stage the students are not really being tested but the "tester" becomes the "testee". If a question is missed by

(Continued on page 2)

Costello (from page 1)

90% of the respondents, I have failed miserably. If the average of the exam is horrible (difficult to define numerically due to varying perceptions of my colleagues as well as myself), then the tester has failed either in exam preparation or in cognitive development of the students with respect to material covered. One thing is certain from the final analysis of a particular exam (or question) and that is we must accept the responsibility of a poor exam (or question) by never allowing it to occur again (toss the question) and appease the students somehow (Did someone say curve?) □□

Karen Goodman
Engineering Science and Physics

In the physical science and physics courses I teach, I test to determine the extent of students' knowledge, not their lack of it. Test questions are based on what I think students should have learned or on how I think they should be able to apply what they have learned, not on an attempt to achieve a certain grade distribution for the exam.

> I test to determine the extent of students' knowledge, not their lack of it.

In composing a physical science (e.g. geology, astronomy, energy and environment) test, I use a list of objectives distributed to students at least one full week before the test date. This list spells out in behavioral terms (list, state, identify, diagram, distinguish, describe, name, etc.) what students are expected to know from lectures, class discussions, and text readings. Test questions are not taken word-for-word from the list; rather, the objectives focus my thinking on definite instructional goals to remind me of what I considered to be the important points of a particular unit and avoid questions which are merely statements lifted from the text or from my lecture notes. Students' guessing about what is important is minimized. The objectives are not outlines of the material; the information required by the objectives must be obtained from reviewing the text, lecture notes and perhaps even laboratory exercises.

My physical science exams consist of approximately 60% objective questions: mainly multiple choice, sometimes matching, never true/false. Multiple choice questions offer the greatest flexibility in designing questions for different levels of learning, from pure facts to analysis, while providing simple, fast, objective grading. I try to make the very first question on the exam so easy that any student with even a minimal understanding of the material can answer correctly. This is a good confidence-builder and morale-booster for the rest of the exam. Questions of increasing difficulty require knowledge of more complex relationships or application of knowledge to a novel situation, not memorization of more obscure facts.

The remaining 40% consists of several relatively short, more open-ended questions, where students must supply all of the required information, rather than pick the correct answer from a list. I may ask students to draw or label a diagram, make a list, define terms, describe differences and/or similarities, read a graph, describe cause-effect relationships or explain how a process works. I try to design these questions so that they can be graded efficiently on a consistent basis for all students. I assign credit for correct information, rather than look for deductions. (There isn't always a distinction; even when there is, this method doesn't always work.)

This test design allows me to grade exams reasonably quickly, thoroughly, and reliably and to return them as soon as possible after the test date for maximum student feedback. □□

Ben Kasper
Business Department

A recent newspaper story reported that one woman lost an eye and a dozen others were treated for serious eye infections after using bacteria-contaminated drops made by a pharmacy. General Motors is recalling 520,000 model year 1989 and 1990 mid-sized cars to repair cruise control and brake lights. As we drive across the Chenango River we assume the bridge has been designed, built and maintained safely; perhaps a dubious assumption. What do these examples all have in common? Some college was responsible for testing and certifying that individuals were competent in all of the above. Clearly, testing and assessment is a major component of higher education and is designed to demonstrate competency in some body of knowledge.

Can testing and assessment measure how effective we are in achieving our objectives? Are effective tests a screening device, and is our responsibility to aid in the "cooling out" process? Or, should the examination encourage students to fulfill their potential? Testing is one of the most important responsibilities of educators, yet one which demands reflection and analysis. I suspect we are more capable as teachers than we are at designing tests that are reliable and valid. The test objective represents only the tip of the philosophical iceberg.

> I suspect we are more capable as teachers than we are at designing tests that are reliable and valid.

(Continued on page 3)

Kasper (from page 2)

A related question is, why has the relationship between grades and student achievement been severed? The task force report in 1983, "A Nation at Risk," called national attention to our deteriorating educational system. Some educators allege that this may well be the first generation that knows less than previous generations. The tests that we give in our classes are supposed to be valid and reliable; they ought to be relatively accurate indicators of student learning. But in some instances we may place excessive emphasis on memorizing theories, models, concepts and data. The format and content of the test as well as the body of knowledge that students are expected to understand raises some legitimate questions.

In engineering science it has been alleged that what a student learns today may be obsolete in five years. In computer science the technology may be changing in nanoseconds. In business we all recognize that we now have a global economic system. Genetic engineering is creating revolutionary breakthroughs in the health sciences.

When we focus on narrow course objectives the learning may very well be transitory rather than permanent. What might be more productive would be a dialogue within departments in terms of what knowledge, skills, and values our graduates ought to possess. Such an educational reflection and re-evaluation is vital for both the institution and our students.

I do not mean to imply that content is irrelevant. The effective education that we endeavor to provide relies heavily upon the assumption we make about the level of prior knowledge and understanding that our students have. We need to supplement our multiple-choice exams with other forms of evaluation which measure our students' ability to think and reason.

The writing assignments are a good indicator of the students' critical thinking skills.

I have used the traditional test bank and have also struggled to construct good test questions. Effective test should discriminate. If the results of one of my exams shows a normal or near normal distribution, then I assume the test is a valid discriminator. In addition to the usual multiple choice test I require my students to complete a substantial writing component. The writing assignments are a good indicator of the students' critical thinking skills.

In my Economics class I assign three 3-page papers that require correlating critical thinking and economic concepts. For example: "Did Ford Motor Company maximize profits when they chose to go to court rather than modify the Pinto gas tank?" In Public Policy class I have them do three 5-page book reports.

While we test current knowledge, it is more important to note that what we teach in the classroom should be of lasting value. We all recognize the need for life-long learning. Many individuals will have three or four different careers during their lifetimes. Students should be equipped with effective communication and computational skills. We hope that students are also capable at problem-solving and critical thinking. We expect that our graduates will be competent at their jobs, and we hope they will be valuable members of their community. In short, the college mission should be to equip our graduates with the skills vital for their careers and to participate as effective citizens in our society.

Margaret LoGalbo
English Department

Testing seems to be one of those necessary evils. My main purposes for testing are: to measure the student's level of knowledge prior to instruction, to measure how much has been learned after instruction, to discover if the student can discuss what has been learned, and to motivate in fulfilling reading assignments.

Throughout the semester I administer diagnostic tests to ascertain what students know and don't know so I can teach accordingly. I use various types of tests: self-made tests (like a pre-bibliography quiz before teaching research techniques), pre-packaged tests (used to test for weaknesses/strengths in grammar), and more formally, an achievement test such as the Whimbey (for members of my Critical Thinking class.) I do not count the grades on these tests when averaging, but instead analyze what occurs during the test taking.

I hope to have students express what they have learned not only through the discussing of key concepts and definitions, but also through the interpreting, applying and evaluating of their knowledge in new situations.

To assess what content and concepts have been mastered, I resort to more difficult types of questioning on mid-terms, finals, and their equivalents. In addition to summary and/or memory types of questioning, I also incorporate analytical and evaluative questioning. I hope to have students express what they have learned not only through the discussing of key concepts and definitions, but also through the interpreting, applying and evaluating of their knowledge in new situations.

For example, in a Critical Thinking class, I might

(Continued on page 4)

LoGalbo (from page 3)

assign a persuasive essay to be read and then pose such questions as:

- ·What is the thesis?
- ·Is this thesis expressed as a policy claim or value claim? Explain.
- ·Provide three examples each of logical appeals, emotional appeals, and wit utilized within this essay.
- ·Can you pose objections/rebuttals to any of these? For example: Can you cite any fallacies and respond to these?
- ·Evaluate this essay.

In a literature class, however, I might give ten quotes from various readings asking students to identify the author and title, then to explain the relevancy of each quote to a story's plot or major theme. On a midterm exam in a freshman composition course, I have asked the students to compare and contrast between two drawings in order to test mastery of previously taught forms of writing like description and analysis.

Also helpful are quizzes or tests - usually short answer types - that are meant to encourage students to read assignments. Questions on these types of quizzes and tests aren't meant to be difficult, but rather incentives to prepare for more difficult discussion and/or exams. For example, a question on a literature quiz might read: "Describe the setting in a 'The Cask of Amontillado,'" or "Cite the dramatic climax." In another type of course, I might request the main idea of the previous night's assignment, or a definition of a key concept. Often these questions turn serve as springboards into the day's lecture.

Some instructors don't believe in formal testing, while others don't believe in testing at all. For me, the question isn't "to test, or not to test", but how to test well, analyze the results, and motivate the students through testing. □□

Margherita Rossi
History and Social Science

"The obvious method of discovering whether the class has studied its work, and of prodding them on to study in the future, is to ask them questions" (Highet, 1950). Hence..."The EXAMINATION is scheduled for...". Cut to heads bent over the same paper, brows wrinkled and nails being bitten over those dreaded questions.

I should begin with a confession. I don't enjoy making a class squirm, showing them up or proving them wrong. Conversely, I invest (well spent) time explaining to students my rationale and motivation for testing; that is, to positively and creatively choose and formulate questions which will strengthen their understanding of concepts and help them integrate the scattered facts and enormous amount of detail underlying the theories in psychology.

As a behaviorist who extols the power of "positive reinforcement", I go so far as informing students that I construct tests with this motivational effect in mind. Looking like confused deer in headlights, they invariably query, "A helpful examination?" "A fun test?" Needless to say, a strong history of "aversive conditioning" has succeeded in "extinguishing" healthy test-taking attitudes and a great deal of "desensitization" is necessary.

... a strong history of "aversive conditioning" has succeeded in "extinguishing" healthy test-taking attitudes ...

The psychological expectancy that is set by my tests is foremost in my mind as I make other routine decisions. First, I decide what material is going to be covered on the test. One option I used to rely on was to test students only on the material in the text, however, students caught on quickly and some of them lost interest in attending class. A solution which has worked for me is to balance the tests, with half the questions based on the text and half based on the lecture; obviously there is an overlap between the two.

Whether the material is from text or lecture, I have found that my tests are more successful when I incorporate a few basic organizational principles. I refer to these principles as my "soap opera approach". First, when I am testing on a particular concept or theory, I use examples that students will want to relate to. For instance, when testing (and lecturing) about sensation and perception, I use contemporary situations such as music or depth perception in catching a football. When I test on whether students understand the concept of classical conditioning, I don't dwell on the slobbering dog, but rather on people's emotional responses to evocative stimuli.

Another technique is to maintain a cast of characters and refer to them across tests. Students seem to enjoy the reappearance of familiar characters and relate to the learning principles inherent in their adventures. While these techniques may appear simplistic, they have a powerful ability to connect students to the material I want them to understand because (like soap operas) the questions and examples inherently intrigue them.

A second decision has to do with the format of the tests. In an introductory psychology course (particularly when teaching multiple sections) the objective exam is the easiest to grade and assemble (given test banks and computer software). Essay exams, in my opinion, are precluded due to the time needed to grade them. I am

(Continued on page 5)

Rossi (from page 4)

comfortable using multiple choice tests because I believe that a well chosen or constructed question can distinguish if students understand the nuances of difference between concepts, for example.

Since I am a novice at test construction, I admit to using "canned" and "sure-fire" test bank questions, however, I am also confident that I know my subject matter and take pride (and great pains) in creating my own questions. This allows me to develop my question-formulating skills and aids in the construction of a knowledge base for students. The questions I create are intimately linked to factual material as well as beliefs and attitudes expressed in class by students. Students are impressed when they encounter their comments or attitudes incorporated into a test to support or refute a concept or theory. I want students to appreciate that their way of knowing and viewing the world is just as important as the knowledge they have learned from me (and others). And if tests are the place where things of "importance" can be found, then it is important that the student's frame of reference be woven in somehow.

I have also found humor and novelty enormously helpful in fostering learning and, of course, in reducing test anxiety.

I have also found humor and novelty enormously helpful in fostering learning and, of course, in reducing test anxiety. I incorporate psychologically-related cartoons into my exams in two ways, both aimed at reinforcing student learning at a simple, unthreatening but memorable level. In the more traditional manner, I construct a multiple choice or short-answer essay question pertaining to one or more related cartoons. In the less traditional manner, I distribute the same cartoons to all students and ask them to formulate questions that they think are connoted by each cartoon. (On occasion, I have students formulate questions sans cartoons). Again, my aim is to engage students in the construction of their own knowledge and I always share with them a quote: "To understand," Jean Piaget said, "is to invent." (As I review questions, I am able to diagnose individual levels of understanding by the type and depth of question generated by each student and can follow-up as indicated).

My last decision concerns the number of tests that I will offer during a semester. I have found that students tend to recall material better and are able to interact with it to a greater extent (in class) when I test frequently. In introductory courses, I give five tests in addition to weekly quizzes. Again, the multiple choice format allows me to maintain this rigorous schedule. In upper level courses, where I prefer to incorporate essay tests, this ideal needs to be balanced against the time to prepare, administer and grade this type of exam.

Although there is an old saying which suggests that "familiarity breeds contempt", in my view of testing and evaluation, for both student and teacher, "familiarity breeds success." □□

Francis Short
Special Careers

My testing philosophy encompasses three elements: I like to keep all tests in line somehow with the course objectives, I try to reduce anxiety as much as possible, and I use tests early and often (a quiz every week) giving immediate feedback by announcing answers right away. Questions about why something is incorrect are also dealt with immediately.

I try to stress to students that tests are an opportunity to respond to a challenge and show how well they understand the material.

I try to stress to students that tests are an opportunity to respond to a challenge and show how well they understand the material. I also offer them the chance to come to my office to discuss any aspects of the test or its administration. Since few of them volunteer to do this, I randomly select people and have conferences with them about how they feel towards the tests. A good deal of informative help can be generated this way.

To sum up, a song/poem is offered.

TESTING PHILOSOPHY
Sung to the tune of "The Long Run"
The Eagles, 1978

I used to test only twice.
I tried to be very nice.
They didn't deserve too much pain.

But now I feel differently:
Test often and early,
Because I think it will result in more gain.

Refrain:
Do I test them for skills?
Do I test something crazy?
Do I test only the book
'Cause I'm a little lazy?

They try and keep on booking.
For me I'll keep on looking
For the best test. Oh, I think I'll find it.
Yes, the best test.

(Continued on page 6)

Short (from page 5)

My testing philosophy
Keeps down the anxiety
That some of the students must feel.

Just how hard should it be?
Sufficient difficulty
to challenge, but still be quite real.

Refrain.

When I decide what kind,
Put course objectives in mind
And I want to make sure that they read.

Multiple choice is all right,
But fill-ins they don't like
I'm the one who must take the lead.

Refrain.

Encourage them to take heart.
Tell them they all can be smart.
Make sure that they believe its true.

If they prepare for the test,
Things will turn out for the best,
Then they won't start out feeling so blue.

Refrain, and fade.

Janet Wright
Nursing Department

Many years ago the nursing department decided to administer only multiple choice examinations. Although we realize the educational value of a wide variety of testing techniques, the decision was made for two reasons:

a) We have found the multiple choice format allows us to test student knowledge of nursing theory in a comprehensive manner, and

b) The national licensing examination for registered nurses is in the multiple choice format, and we are able to familiarize the students with, and desensitize them to, this method of testing. They take the national exam with much experience in reading and understanding the questions.

As a faculty we utilize the data supplied in the computer printout for item analysis. We are able to analyze each question and the exam as a whole for reliability, discrimination and degree of difficulty. We have build a test bank of items that are statistically sound.

We have concerns regarding our ability to write multiple choice questions that test beyond knowledge (simple recall). At issue is our ability to write items that test the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, i.e., comprehension and application. We continue to work to develop this expertise. We primarily test Blooms' highest levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation in the clinical area through patient care and development of patient care plans.

At issue is our ability to write items that test the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, i.e., comprehension and application.

An exam is developed utilizing the instructional objectives for the course. Ideally, a student can use the objectives as a study guide. We also incorporate the nursing process, a universally accepted method of critical thinking for nurses, into the exam. We then develop a test blue print as a planning device. The blue print helps to ensure that all important content to be measured is included; the proper weight is given to the content; and within each content area, the different levels of Bloom's taxonomy and the four stages of the nursing process are applied.

Although each faculty member has ascribed to the value of multiple choice exams, there are variations as to exam length and scheduling. For example, a course might have three - 75 item exams, five 16 - item quizzes that equal one exam, and a 100 - item comprehensive final. Another course might have four 75 - item exams and a 100 - item comprehensive final. If a course has quizzes, a quiz is scheduled for the class period just before an exam. This provides the students with an opportunity to review their strengths and weaknesses. One of our courses allocates 10% of the final grade to a student teaching project that requires the student to apply class theory in a formalized clinical setting.

Coming Next Issue

Next month's topic will be the start of Spring semester classes including articles from Francis Battisti, Bryan Blanchard, Cathy Collins, Rick Firenze, Joanne Maniago, and Steve Natale.

Center Stage is published monthly in cooperation with the Professional Development Committee.

Send correspondence and contributions to the editor:

Paul O'Heron
Mathematics Department, T-215
Phone : 771-5128
E-Mail : OHERON_P (All-in-One)

Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 1 Number 4 *January 15, 1991*

BCC's New Teaching Resources Center

Alice McNeely

Thanks to the combined efforts of President Dellow, Dr. Blanchard and the Professional Development Committee's Ad Hoc Committee for the Teaching Resource Center, Broome Community College's Teaching Resource Center (TRC) is a reality. The TRC is the result of the support of people who are dedicated to the high quality of teaching offered on this campus. I am pleased that the TRC committee also selected me to be its first coordinator.

The underlying goal of the TRC is to improve the quality of education at BCC. The TRC will be a place faculty can go to relax and recharge, help each other with pedagogical problems, and discover ways to improve their effectiveness as an educator. The TRC will help faculty access and utilize existing resources, while at the same time serving as a catalyst for new teaching experiences. The center will also offer faculty a place to communicate about the art and science of teaching, and a place to share and learn from each other. We want to provide faculty with the stimulation, support, and opportunity to improve their skills in teaching.

The underlying goal of the TRC is to improve the quality of education at BCC.

When you drop in to the TRC you may find faculty discussing classroom issues and teaching methods with a new faculty member, or a faculty member experimenting with some software on the TRC's computer. The TRC's library/lounge will offer hot coffee, conversation, and the opportunity to browse through current periodicals and books on display. The bulletin board will announce upcoming workshops the center is sponsoring. For example: a guest speaker from another campus, a seminar from the Computer Center on making the most of the VAX terminal in your office, or a faculty member sharing some insights and techniques on grading. I will be available to answer or research questions such as: "Is there a place on campus to make multi-colored overheads?", "What video tapes are available on campus?", and "How can I access programs from the campus satellite hookup?"

The core of any successful teaching center is the faculty who support it. I will be speaking briefly during the faculty meeting scheduled for Friday, January 18. I welcome any ideas or suggestions on how the TRC can benefit you as an individual, as a department member, or as a BCC faculty member. Also, if you have something you think would benefit your colleagues, be it a teaching methodology, a video tape collection, software expertise, or whatever else, let me know and we'll arrange the appropriate forum. I look forward to talking with each of you during the upcoming semester, and introducing you to the benefits of a strong TRC.

The TRC is located on the 2nd floor of the Learning Resources Center, in the old Professional Development Resource Room, overlooking the "A" lot. To be more specific, go through the double doors into the library proper and take the stairway on your right to the 2nd floor. Walk straight across the room and the door to the TRC is located on the back wall.

We are currently reorganizing the room to make it comfortable and functional (a phone, a computer, chairs, etc.). Stop by now for informal chats if you wish, or watch for an announcement soon about our grand opening.

Contents :

BCC's New Teaching Resources Center
-- Alice McNeely, page 1

The Freshman Experience : BCC's College 101
-- Bryan Blanchard, page 2

Teaching the Developmental Student
-- Steve Natale, page 3

The First Day
-- Francis Battisti, page 4

The Bio-Phone
-- Rick Firenze, page 4

Tips to Adjunct Faculty
-- Kathy Collins, page 5

Doing a Course Outline
-- Joanne Maniago, page 7

Aside
-- Before you Begin, page 8

The Freshman Experience: BCC's College 101

Bryan Blanchard

This semester two Broome Community College instructors, Lynn Balunas and Ann Sova, will conduct seminars for new students. The classes, under the heading College 101, "The College Experience", will be modeled on the University of South Carolina's Freshman Experience Seminars. Both of the instructors have been studying that model for over a year and participated in an intensive summer seminar for faculty interested in new approaches in teaching. The classes they will offer have been fashioned by faculty from many different departments on campus and are intended to introduce students not just to BCC but to the culture of higher education as well.

The Freshman Seminar Movement, as a national phenomenon, is about a decade old. Its leading proponents have been John Gardner and Jerome Jewler, both of the University of South Carolina. These two spokesmen have written extensively on the importance of the initial experiences students have in college and have urged faculty to re-think the ways freshmen are treated. The Freshman Seminar model has three main benefits for students: it enables students to cope with new expectation; it offers a preview of the main messages of the college experiences; it serves to induct students into intense interaction with peers and faculty and, hence, into the campus culture. Ultimately the point of the seminar is to improve student learning and raise persistence levels. But there are many more features of the experience which can benefit students and enhance their chances of success.

> Ultimately the point of the seminar is to improve student learning and raise persistence levels.

Of course, interest in the needs of freshmen goes back a long way in higher education. There were dormitories set aside for them in earlier periods, as well as special advising and tutoring arrangements. There were even freshman orientation courses as early as 1888 - not 1988 - at Boston University and a course on the thinking process at Johns Hopkins in the 1920's. But for most of the recent history of higher education, the needs of freshmen were addressed mainly through orientation programs. When those efforts were neglected during the seventies and eighties, the need for some new approach became apparent. To a great extent, disenchantment with traditional methods underlies the current popularity of the new model.

If there is a single reason that so many campuses have adopted the Freshman Seminar, it is that the movement is eclectic. Rather then being a single theme, it is a congeries of ideas and currents in higher education. Included within it are the "Writing to Learn" and "Writing Across the Curriculum" initiatives, the movements on Critical Thinking, Values and Clarification, Global Perspective, Diversity Education and Outcomes Assessment. Also included are personality/interest inventories, career exploration, attention to learning styles, study skills, stress and time management, communication and interaction exercises, and elements designed to enhance the advisement and orientation processes. Indeed, the list can grow so long -- some campuses include health and wellness, character development, library skills, coping with criticism, and special focuses on segments of the student population -- and it can easily become unmanageable. That is one reason why the BCC committees which have studied the seminars have both surveyed the variety of ways in which our individual programs serve student needs and recommended limits to the variety of purposes our seminars will serve.

> The evidence that students do benefit from Freshman Seminars is becoming clearer.

The evidence that students do benefit from Freshman Seminars is becoming clearer. For example, several studies report that such classes have a positive influence on retention. This is probably due to the fact that the quality of the relationship between student and instructor is important to student satisfaction with instruction; and to the equally important issue of student integration into campus social systems. Since the Freshman Seminar is designed to help students make the transition to their new environments, it is not surprising that increased retention results. Indeed, in recent years courses have been developed which aim at invoking all of these strategies. For example, a single course may be designed to maximize student-faculty interaction and to introduce students to the whole panoply of support services which are available to them (financial aid, counseling, tutoring, career development, supplemental instruction, organized study groups, self-paced or mastery learning resources, advisement).

If there is any criticism of Freshman Seminars, it is that some faculty believe they emphasize affective outcomes over more substantive cognitive outcomes. This is a debate which has continued throughout the life of the movement. It must be acknowledged that the potential for overemphasizing one variety of outcomes over another certainly does exist, but so does the possibility that any course's outcomes could be distorted, even by the well-intentioned. At BCC, the course objectives have been carefully balanced to include both a heavy emphasis on social issues looked at from a variety of perspectives and an innovative introduction to our General Education Program. To do this, incidentally, all of the General Education subcommittees have been asked to further refine the criteria of their individual general education principle, and to submit model exercises and experiences

(Continued on page 6)

TEACHING THE DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENT

Steven Natale

It is always risky to generalize about any group of students, and those we call developmental students are no exception. At BCC, developmental has traditionally meant that a student was lacking in one or more of the critical basic skills areas: reading, writing, or mathematics. But in the last several years, many of the students we see in our classrooms have educational deficits which go beyond a simple lack of skills. Carmen De Vita, Coordinator of Reading at BCC, has noted that students with a GED diploma, for example, may not be conversant with the most basic concepts in social studies or science, which we hope the majority of our students learn in high school.

With this type of educational background, it is almost trite to say that these students lack study skills. Their problems usually go much deeper. Developmental students usually have little awareness of what learning is or how it happens. They often equate learning with memorizing, and view a competent learner as a sort of alien with a special genetic endowment. Their response to the classroom is one of "learned helplessness," a response learned in part from the relatively passive high school classroom, where most of the material is related to the students by the teacher. It is clear that a semester or two of remediation will not remake them anew in time for credit courses.

Confronting this passivity, or in some cases muted hostility, in the classroom is difficult, since most of us have not been trained specifically to work with the underprepared student, and since the lethargy and inertia which developmental students often display does nothing to enhance our love of teaching. Yet, if there is to be any significant change in the student's academic performance, we need to adapt our approach and materials to deal with these attitudes.

> ... if there is to be any significant change in the student's academic performance, we need to adapt our approach...

The best way to effect this change, I believe, is to begin with clear course expectations. Simply handing out a course outline is not sufficient for students who have little sense of procedure. In discussing your class, share with students the rationale for the assignments and the type of tests you give. Why is a term paper an important part of your course? Why do you choose to give multiple choice tests? It is also important to stress due dates and consequences of late assignments. And be firm with your expectations for assignments; if a paper is not done in an acceptable way, tell the student specifically what must be done to make it acceptable. If necessary, refer the student for assistance. If longer assignments can be done in stages, so much the better for developmental students. Long range goals and projects are not easy for them, particularly when they have to work without close teacher supervision.

In addition to discussing the course outline, give students the benefit of your expertise in the subject area. As a successful student in the field, you are well-qualified to tell them how to study for your course. You probably had a hand in choosing your textbook for the course; what is the most effective way to read it? If you can share difficult experiences in your own schooling as well as the successful ones, your students will genuinely appreciate it. They need to know that learning does not always come easy, even in the case of their instructor. Being real with your students like this breaks down barriers which developmental students feel toward educational authority, and it may make it easier for them to approach you with a question about the course later.

Once the course is underway, remember that underprepared students, like all of us, need feedback as soon as possible. Waiting until midsemester to evaluate may be disastrous for this type of student, since they often bury their head in the sand and hope that their coursework is going all right. Evaluation in the second or third week, whether by a formal test or some informal means, allows the student to obtain help from you or from the Learning Assistance Center in time. If you are making a referral, tell the Center's faculty as much as you can about the student's problems, so they can better individualize the assistance.

In planning your classes, remember that developmental students, like most others in the community college, enjoy learning in groups. But apart from enjoyment, group activity works well for these students in a number of ways. They often lack confidence and may be shy about participating in class, and a student group can be a relatively safe setting in which they can express themselves. Collaborative activity also exposes them to the ideas and opinions of others and allows them to begin to think in shades of gray instead of black and white. Exchanging ideas in this setting reinforces critical thinking and gives developmental students a sense of community and a sense of shared struggle in their learning. And there may be practical benefits as well. Don Dunham, who has taught developmental English here for several years, reports that having his students write collaborative research papers has produced positive results and has substantially reduced his end-of-term reading.

With all of the problems that developmental students have, remember that they also have strengths. Simply

(Continued on page 7)

The First Day

Francis Battisti

"First Days" happen! The essence of the "First Day" is to establish a foundation for a fifteen-week working relationship between student and professor. The quality of this relationship is pivotal to the success of the student and to your success as an educator.

In this context, certain approaches are pertinent:

A) Establish a degree of freedom of communication within the class by using a number of avenues to help students get acquainted. One useful technique is to ask all class members, as well as yourself, to introduce themselves, tell where they are from, indicate their major concentration and goals for the course.

B) Learn students' names and something about them as quickly as possible. Ask students to complete an information sheet containing prerequisite courses, telephone number and address, their expectations of the course and what knowledge they plan to advance in the next fifteen weeks. I have found it useful to collect this information at the end of the first class and review it again with the students at the end of the semester, thus putting a sense of closure on the semester.

C) Share with students your expectations of them, e.g, the level of preparedness which students will need to do well in the course.

D) Distribute a complete, jargon-free syllabus so that the students can understand the substance of your course.

E) Be prepared. According to Joyce Povlacs, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, research indicates that students typically decide in the first fifteen minutes what kind of teacher you are, and what kind of experience they will have being in your class. Carefully structure how you will begin class. Provide the information about you and your course which the students need.

F) Stress your availability to students. Express your sincerity in their coming to your office. Outline your office hours, office telephone number and departmental/divisional office number. Welcoming home telephone calls is a personal preference. It is also helpful to mention other professional commitments, which make you unavailable at certain times, i.e. meetings, individual advisement, and similar responsibilities. This also gives them a more focused snapshot of your integrity.

G) Exude enthusiasm! McKeadrie notes, in Teaching Tips; A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher, 8th Edition, that the instructors who make the most lasting impressions on students are those who possess and generate enthusiasm. Consequently, let the excitement that you feel for your field flow to your students. Use humor! As Victor Borge states, "Laughter is the shortest distance between two people".

> One of the rare benefits of being educators is that students give us the unique opportunity to be the instructor who we always wanted to have.

One of the rare benefits of being educators is that students give us the unique opportunity to be the instructor who we always wanted to have. The experience of being creative can be shared with our students when we take an innovative attitude toward what we are doing. Consequently, students can become participants in their own learning and be inspired by our sense of awe and mystery. The potential to have an effective relationship with our students is the dynamic opportunity which we take to the "First Day".

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The BIO-PHONE

Richard Firenze

During the summer of 1985 I had the pleasure of representing the college at the Master Teachers Conference held in Greenfield, Massachusetts. The objective of this annual seminar is to foster the enhancement of teaching by allowing college faculty to exchange pedological ideas, techniques and concerns of undergraduate instruction.

On the last day of the seminar we were gathered together by our facilitators and asked one question and given fifteen seconds to write down a single word/short sentence response.

"If you could give one piece of advice to a nascent college teacher, what would it be?" Four words appeared on my paper: SHOW THEM YOU CARE!!

Them refers to that group of individuals we face for the better part of a year. That group that pays our salaries, and can give us our greatest joys along with some monumental frustrations: our students. Show your students you care!! Certainly not novel, not brilliant, not creative, but the more I thought about it, the more our group

(Continued on page 6)

Tips to Adjunct Faculty

Kathy Collins

The first few weeks of any semester are filled with the unexpected. Since the Fall 1990 semester was not only my first at BCC, but was also my first teaching assignment, I encountered the unexpected every day. The most valuable tool I had in dealing with the snags and surprises was humor.

One day I was nabbed by the "eye" at the exit of the library while carrying a videotape which I had checked out, but had not been desensitized. As the alarm rang and my face grew redder, my eyes met those of a student who was smirking in delight at my predicament. On my way out after having the tape desensitized, I passed close by the student and said out of the corner of my mouth, "Cover me, John, while I make a break for it." An incident like this can serve as an effective ice breaker and set the tone for the rest of the semester.

You, however, need not suffer the same embarrassment and stress. I do not promise that you will sail through your semester trauma free, but I am sure that the following tips will help you to avoid some of the rough spots. Maybe next semester you can even write an article listing things that I've left out.

1. Find your office and, if possible, obtain a key to the building in which your office is located. If you do this early on and want to work on a weekend, you will be prepared.

2. Obtain a current campus directory (contact John Scaturro, W205, ext. 5199). It lists not only individual and departmental offices and phone numbers, but also the abbreviations for all the buildings on campus. You will discover the value of this as you dash to a meeting in B204. It's less embarrassing to ask directions to the Business Building than to "B". Note: a campus map is located on the inside back cover of the college catalogue.

> I do not promise that you will sail through your semester trauma free, but ...

3. Find out if secretarial services are available to type your handouts and to take phone messages. Introduce yourself to the secretary so she can put a face to your name. Secretaries are valuable sources of information.

4. Find out if you have a mailbox. If so, find where it is. If not, find out where your postal and campus mail would be delivered.

5. Make sure you have a copy of the correct textbook for each course. Check with the bookstore to make sure there are sufficient copies for your students. If there isn't you would rather know in advance so you can prepare any necessary materials for your class.

6. Cars parked on campus must be registered with security. Be sure you know where your assigned lot is located. If there is a possibility of driving a second car to campus, inquire about obtaining a second parking decal. Unregistered vehicles parked in faculty lots are ticketed and fined $5.00.

7. Find out how to use the overhead projectors, and how to make the transparencies. Leira Santiago-Velez, an adjunct who just completed her first semester at BCC, found the projectors easy to use and an indispensable teaching tool. According to Leira, the transparencies themselves can be prepared quickly and easily. Audio-visual equipment is also available. Contact the AV Department in L6, ext. 5004.

8. Copying on campus is done at a central location. The Copy Center is in SA113, ext. 5113. Items to be copied may be sent via inter-office mail in red envelopes marked specifically for that purpose, or presented in person. Your copies will be processed while you wait (about 15 minutes), or will be mailed to you by a date you specify. Items to be copied must be accompanied by an official form available at the Copy Center. Collect and keep a few forms and red envelopes handy to save time.

9. The Testing Center, located in T113, is available for students who must take a make-up exam. Bring the test, with the student's name, your name, and any instructions (time limit, open book, etc.) to the Learning Assistance Center desk (ext. 5038) located in the Library to the left of the circulation desk. The Center will administer the test and you pick it up there.

10. You will be invited to workshops which focus on, for example, addressing the needs of students, increasing student motivation, and achieving test excellence. Make a point of attending these workshops. You will meet fellow faculty members and make valuable contacts, which helps to dispel the feeling of isolation. At the same time you will find a forum for particular questions you have regarding difficult classroom situations. Many of these workshops are arranged by the Counseling Center (W200, ext. 5210).

11. While on that note, if you think a student is in need of counseling (career or personal), feel free to call the Counseling Center to discuss your concerns.

12. Your most valuable source of information can be your students. The students at BCC are friendly, generous, and helpful. Don't hesitate to gain a rapport with them, and let them share their expertise with you.

Firenze (from page 4)

discussed it, the more I liked it. Certainly when asked to differentiate "good" instructors from "poor" instructors the sense of being cared for and cared about is a true delineator used by most students.

But the more difficult part was how can we, in fact, show them? Not just tell them, but actually show them we, in fact, care.

One technique I have used for several years with a good deal of success is simple, cheap, extremely useful, and more than anything illustrates that you do indeed care not just for each student's academic success, but care for the student as a developing human being. That technique

> ... and more than anything illustrates that you do indeed care not just for each student's academic success, but care for the student as a developing human being.

is the BIO-PHONE. It works as follows: On that all important first day of class, I specifically point out and emphasize to my students that the course outline contains a plethora of information which will help them do well in the course, not the least of which is my home telephone number. Then with the fanfare of a Barnum & Bailey introduction I point out to them that through the miracle of modern technology all they have to do, if the need arises, is to dial (push) that number and with a high degree of probability either myself or someone related to me will magically "appear" on the other end. I tell them that this futuristic concept is technically called the BIO-PHONE. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week -- a kind of auditory Wegman's. At this point I make it perfectly clear that I would appreciate it if they used this device prior to the hour of 11:00pm if at all possible.

Why would someone need to use this device? Needs can range from attempting to find out if there is a quiz on Monday, to informing me of an illness, to discussing a recent episode of Nova in which data was presented that was contradictory to one of my recent lectures. (What me wrong?? Never!!) By far the most frequent use of the BIO-PHONE is "exam eve". Here I encourage the students to call if they have any questions on the objectives for the exam. I also guarantee I will be there from 7:00pm to 11:00pm, barring illness or emergency.

How often is the BIO-PHONE used?? During an average semester 80% of the students will call at least once. Unfortunately most only on the "exam-eve" special, but still 80% is significant. There are, of course, those students who will never call for one reason or another despite your urging, and there are those students who will always call. They seem to feel obligated to let you hear their voices at least twice a week. But that's truly a small price to pay.

Does it work?? Emphatically yes!! First of all, students no longer feel frustrated if they are stuck on a particular objective, or if they can't seem to find something in their notes or if they don't understand something in the text. They can call immediately and "strike while the iron is hot". No waiting, no lines, immediate feedback.

More importantly it works by showing the student you care enough about them to do just a little bit more. That you are willing to open your life to them beyond Titchener Hall, beyond 4:00pm. You show them they are an important part of your life not just nameless faces that allow you to collect a paycheck every two weeks.

My student evaluations indicate that next to the BIO-BARGAIN (see Center Stage, Vol.1 No.2) the BIO-PHONE is the most appreciated part of the course. Students know I care and many respond to caring by caring about themselves and their education. Some for the first time. □□

Blanchard (from page 2)

for inclusion in the Freshman Seminars. In effect, then, the entire General Education committee structure (approximately 55 faculty) has been enlisted into the effort as an Ad Hoc Steering Committee and this is in addition to the two faculty committees which have been leading the Freshman Seminar initiative, another 25 faculty. There are certainly going to be a large number of people thinking about the initial experiences of these two sections of students.

During the semester, the two instructors hope to develop information on how the course is affecting students. The office of Institutional Research will be serving as a resource to them and helping to incorporate "classroom research" into the effort. This information, in turn, will be shared with our various faculty committees as they try to draw together their conclusions and make recommendations on the future of Freshman Seminars at BCC.

One certainly has to admire Lynn and Ann for agreeing to such extensive collaboration. They are orchestrating a significant experiment in teaching and in collegiality. □□

Quoted

As the saying goes -- we see in terms of our education. We look at the world and see what we have learned to believe in there. We have been conditioned to expect. Aaron Siskind, "Minicam Photography", 1945.

Doing a Course Outline

Joanne Maniago

Due to the wide variety of skills and abilities in students at community colleges, the syllabus or course outline is very important. Go over it the first day of class to make sure they have been exposed to the information on it. Here are a few little bits of awareness I have gained through a number of years of teaching.

1. Remember to make rules regarding individual student responsibility clear and stick by them.

Remember to make rules regarding individual student responsibility clear and stick by them.

2. Set a time limit for make-up exams if you allow them. Otherwise you will have one or two who will want to take all the exams and hand in all projects the day after the semester is over.

3. Also, if you are going to give the make-ups yourself, set specific times or else they will be dribbling in all day.

4. Be sure your office hours are clear, as well as the location of your office. This will cover you from the accusation "I came by and you weren't there." There are students who feel if they wander by your office at their convenience and you aren't there, they have fulfilled their responsibility. At the end of the semester it is your fault they couldn't get help.

Specifically, the course outline or syllabus should always contain the following basic information:

I. HEADING
- Course Title and Number
- Instructor's Name
- Date of the latest revision

II. OBJECTIVES

Should contain two or three statements of what you are going to try and achieve in the course. Will of necessity be general, but should give some idea where you intend to go.

III. ACHIEVING THESE OBJECTIVES

A. Policy on attendance (if you downgrade for poor attendance, make sure the student understands this from the beginning).

B. Instructor's policy on examinations, whether or not make-ups are allowed, if so, explain procedure. There is a testing center run by the Learning Assistance Center (ext. 5083). The teacher leaves the exam with the secretary in LAC. The student makes an appointment with the secretary to take the test and the teacher picks it up within a reasonable time. That way you can also avoid the excuse of "I came by, but your weren't in your office." You should also note in this section whether or not you penalize for taking an exam late, for example, deduct 5 points for any late exam.

C. How grades are determined, quizzes, exams, finals, papers and project. Either, (1) the percentage of the final grade for each exam, paper, or project, or (2) points assigned to each part of final total. Be sure and mention any credit given for class participation and whether you drop the lowest grade in the final average.

D. Instructor's office hours and office location.

E. Specific assignments - List of assigned books and/or readings. May be constructed in any fashion you think clear, but you need to be sure the students have information about, (1) what material will be required on each quiz or exam, (2) dates of major exams, and (3) when projects or papers are due. You may find that this needs to be supplemented with study guides for each major exam. If you give "pop" quizzes alert them to that fact although exact times are not listed.

IV. ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS: Information or required work other than classroom assignments.

A. Research Papers
B. Library Assignments
C. Reports or group work
D. Other

Be sure this information is explicit with a reminder of dates due even if you've included it in Part III. Mention your policy on work submitted late. □□

Natale (from page 3)

making a decision to return to school after so many years of mediocre performance shows that they have courage and the desire to better their situation. As Mina Shaughnessy put it, they have "survived their secondary education, but have not thrived on it." Most of them have substantial experience in life and are usually eager to share those experiences. Capitalize on this. If you can apply the concepts learned in class to the world they know, you will be amazed at their grasp of ideas.

Developmental students will usually need constant support throughout their academic career. But with concerned instructors and the various support services available to them, they can succeed. If you would like more information on working with developmental students, please contact the Learning Assistance Center, Library, Room 101, ext. 5038. □□

Aside

The following is excerpted from 147 practical tips for teaching professors, compiled and edited by Bob Magnan, Magna Publications, Inc.

Teachers have six different identities, according to the expectation of their students. decide how you want to accept each of these identities -- then act accordingly.

Be the expert.

You are in the classroom because of your knowledge of the subject matter, you experience and wisdom. that does not imply you know it all, only that you know more than your students. Students expect expertise. But they are also realistic -- and perceptive. If you can't answer a question, admit it, then find out.

Be the formal authority.

Structure the course. Set the standards, goals and deadlines. Control classroom procedure and behavior. The balance of power is not equally distributed in the teacher-student relationship. You have to provide form and structure for the learning experience.

Be a socializing agent.

You are a representative of your field, and especially of the values, assumptions and intellectual style that characterize that particular "micro-society." "Socialize" your students to the norms, standards, procedures, activities and interests of your field. Sometimes we become so immersed in academe we forget we represent the non-academic world. Our students see us as more than just teachers -- we're biochemists, anthropologists, businesspeople, architects, lawyers, linguists, engineers...

Be a facilitator.

Listen to your students. Question them. Pay attention to their needs and interests. Sometimes we suffer from tunnel vision: our students enter our courses without appropriate preparation and skills. They can't use the library properly. They can't organize adequately. They write poorly. They're weak in reading. They can't analyze. We think, "It's not my job." Think rather, "They're my students." Help them, direct them to resources, give them suggestions and guidance, challenge them to develop. That's our job as facilitators.

Be an ego ideal.

Students consider teachers as role models, for better or for worse. We may not accept this identity willingly, but since teaching is fundamentally a personal activity, our personality has a direct -- and sometimes crucial -- influence on the outcome. Stereotypes abound: absent-minded professors, mad scientists, litigious lawyers, airhead philosophers, bottom-line businesspeople ... These are images, not people. And they're negative, not positive. We aren't all like that, are we? Let your character, your individuality show through your teaching.

Be a person.

Students expect teachers to be human. Although we function as teachers and students, we are not "teaching machines" and "learning machines" -- we all have feelings and experiences. Be human -- in class and outside. Inspire trust in your students. Encourage them to express their ideas and opinions and feelings freely. Sure, sometimes being human is not as efficient as being a machine. But then, sometimes a moment "off the track" can enhance learning more effectively than a long lecture. □□

Editor's Box

Hi! I am coming to you from the back page this issue because BCC's new Teaching Resources Center is important enough news to claim the entire front page. I think this is great news to begin a new semester!

In addition, this entire issue is devoted to the first few days of class. There are articles on both concept and implementation; hopefully enough of a mix so that the veterans will nod knowingly while finding a few new ideas, and the new comers will get a feel for what we are about.

Note: this is issue 4 of Center Stage. If you missed any of the previous issues, contact VPAA Bryan Blanchard's office at 5138.

Coming Next Issue

In next month's issue the question "What is a good teacher?" will be addressed by Denton Covert, Kelli Heffernan, Sue Maier, Michael O'Kane, Patrick O'Neil, Karen Sherwood, Jo VanWely, and Duane Whittaker. If you'd like to give your opinion as well, we'd love to have it. Contact the editor to reserve your space.

Center Stage is published monthly in cooperation with the Professional Development Committee.

Send correspondence and contributions to the editor:

Paul O'Heron
Mathematics Department, T-215
Phone : 771-5232
E-Mail : OHERON_P (All-in-One)

Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 1 Number 5 *February 15, 1991*

"What do you think makes a good teacher?" When I asked that question to the people whose names are below, neither I nor they had any clear idea what the answer was. They did, however, volunteer to explain a characteristic or view of what they believed a good teacher to be. I think they each did a wonderful job.

I think a large part of being a good teacher is to steadily grow as an individual. This means, among innumerable other things, learning a new method, learning a new student, learning a new story, or learning from one's mistakes. At times it also means exposing newly formed pieces of oneself to peers and classes. Occasionally that's a little uncomfortable, but more often it is a wonderfully enervating and synergetic experience. And, even though I teach Mathematics on a day to day basis, that's the one lesson I'd like my students to learn. Enjoy the issue. -- ed.

Contents :

What Makes a Good Teacher?
-- Brian Blair, page 1

An Invitation
-- Denton Covert, page 2

Teacher as Coach
-- Kelli Heffernan, page 3

A Foundation for Good Teaching
-- Suzanne M. Maier, page 4

A Good Teacher is Not Robin Williams
-- Michael O'Kane, page 5

Ethics and Good Teaching
-- Patrick O'Neil, page 5

Learning Teaching
-- Jo VanWely, page 6

Make Your Lesson Important
-- Duane Whittaker, page 7

What Is a Good Teacher?
-- Jack Williams, page 7

Aside, Presentations Plus
-- Claire Ligeikis-Clayton, page 8

What Makes A Good Teacher?

Brian Blair, Student

You do, if you radiate a passion for the subject matter and an equally strong thirst for enlightening your students.

Get to know their names, mostly their first names, and their levels of development. Use adept/avid students to relay data on a separate level. Early in the semester it might be a good idea to spur active class socialization and volunteer tutors to support any student having difficulty.

The atmosphere you choose to create depends on the material to be taught, but no matter what atmosphere you decide is right for the classroom, you are the professional. As a professional, you are not only an authority

> ... you are not only an authority figure, but a role model.

figure, but a role model. Radiate confidence and watch each student tan in your glow. Exude a commanding presence in your speech and knowledge of the material. However, outside of adhering to the course outline, this should be the extent of your inflexibility as a mentor. Be prepared to discard your calculated lesson plan at the spark of a relevant deviation that has spurred class participation.

Be aware of the main level on which you relate the subject to the class. In this fragile tutor/tutee relationship, proper communication and the style in which you choose to communicate will make or break you as a successful teacher. Generate feedback, both positive and negative. What are your students saying about the class? What are they saying about you? Many times negative critiques are brought about by an imposition of your personal beliefs on the students'. Set aside your personal differences and open communications. Everyone's the next James Dean in college - so be a teacher and not a preacher. Talk to the students and not at them! Make eye contact with each student. The eyes are the window to the soul; let them know you have some.

Incorporate humor whenever possible. It's not too hard. You have a captive audience, most likely strung out on coffee and cigarettes. It's safe to say they could use a

(Continued on page 2)

Blair (from page 1)

tension breaker periodically. Humor is a motivator and a stimulant for feedback, and the amount of feedback you get determines the pace at which your class is ready to progress.

> If you aren't stimulated by the way you teach, chances are they're not going to be.

Twenty out of twenty-five students have shown up for your lecture today. Eighteen brought pen and paper. Sixteen are still awake. Fifteen are not in an altered state. Ten have been in a college classroom before. Five have successfully completed a semester of college in the past. Three have your subject as a major.

Which group do you teach to?

Reach twenty-five of them by teaching fifteen with originality. Regardless of prerequisite skill, fifteen are capable of learning today. As I mentioned before, class socialization and participation are key elements in employing an effective and enjoyable class. The ten students "out of your reach" might be coaxed into learning by their peer group.

Stimulate them as much as possible by squeezing in information with a side order of common sense and personal experience. Nowhere is it written in concrete that you are only allowed to instruct Igneous Rocks 101 or whatever. The subject is college life, adulthood, teaching, learning, and success. Shed insight on current events that affect all of us. Remind them of the importance of a college education.

If you aren't stimulated by the way you teach, chances are they're not going to be. Your attitude will influence theirs. Keep your ear to the ground in and outside of class for this feedback.

To get beyond the obstacles of generation gaps and personal difference, interact attentively and gently. Let your students know you are interested in their progress and efforts by taking the time for one-on-one discussion. Deal with each as an adult and they will treat you with respect. You may have common interests with the problem students. Remove yourself from the structured atmosphere of the classroom and interact with these students during your free time. Go for coffee, shoot hoops; transcend the formalities of instruction into collaboration.

What price can you put on the joy of seeing that "light-bulb click on" for the first time? Man, that's what you're there for. Help them to help themselves. Keep'em smiling and keep'em thinking. But most of all, above and beyond the academic learning - teach them to learn.

An Invitation

Denton Covert, English Department

One of my professors in college was particularly tough. I was not one of her star students and struggled for every 'B' grade. Nevertheless her knowledge and enthusiasm seemed endless, and although she taught courses which were not in my major, I took every course she offered. She seemed to pay little attention to me, except for to single me out for unusual criticism on my essays. Once, when I indulged in a particularly maudlin sentiment, she wrote in the margin, " Shall I shed a tear?"

I was embarrassed.

One day near the end of my senior year she asked me to stop after class. As I did she pulled a couple of dog eared books from her bag and handed them to me with a simple, "I thought you might like these." I was astonished. These were books from her personal library. With this simple gesture she had recognized me not only as an individual, but as a worthy fellow learner with a shared interest. Her kindness and encouragement will never be forgotten; her influence remains incalculable.

As I reflect on the question, "What is a good teacher?", I ponder my experience of over twenty years as a student and twenty more years as a teacher. It is difficult to identify the specific characteristics of the good teacher from such a varied array of personalities, styles, and disciplines. Nevertheless certain general characteristics of the good teacher do emerge.

The most obvious characteristic of good teachers is that they possess a vast knowledge about their disciplines. In fact their involvement in their disciplines is raised to the level of a passion. This is not without its drawbacks. The student can easily become overwhelmed and intimidated by such knowledge. The classroom can become a tedium of trivia and disparate pieces of information. So, as basic as this characteristic is, it is not enough. What affects students the most is not just the amount of knowledge, but the enthusiasm about the subject that teachers project. That enthusiasm itself can be contagious, inviting students to join in the learning enterprise.

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That brings us to the second characteristic of good teachers which has to do with method (how they teach or how they manage the learning environment). Perhaps we do a disservice by distinguishing too carefully between content (what we teach) and method (how we teach.) Our workshops and conferences promote and proliferate new

(Continued on page 3)

Covert (from page 2)

techniques at an astounding rate. We've all seen the fads come and go. So it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify one technique or another as characteristic of the good teacher. To the observer of the learning enterprise, the good teacher's method may not be immediately perceptible. This is because such methods are not separable from the two primary sources that generate them. These are the content or discipline itself and the teacher's personality. First, each discipline itself is a way of knowing and as such has within itself inherent methods. Secondly, teachers themselves are learners with their own idiosyncratic styles. Of course, teachers are life long learners and as such are reflective and self-conscious about the learning process. Hence each teacher's "method" is a unique blend that is generated from the twin poles of their discipline and their personality. Methods are not grafted on to content and secondary to it, but rather are inseparable from content, flowing as a natural outgrowth husbanded by the personality of the teacher. So the methods of the good teacher are natural and organic, inviting the student to participate as a fellow learner. The good teacher is an authority, but not an authoritarian. As Vincent Ruggiero recently said, the good teacher eschews stuffing students with facts and information in favor of inviting them into a self-motivated inquiry.

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The third quality of good teachers is that they are role models of the educated person. Some of my colleagues may object to this as too grandiose or that it puts too much strain on the conduct of their lives. After all, they may say, the teacher's job is to teach a certain subject and that's all. But teachers stand inescapably in the spotlight as examples of the educated person. Good teachers recognize this special feature of their vocation. If we can say about teaching methods in relationship to content that the "medium is the message," then by extension we might be able to say that the teacher is the curriculum. Not only what we know, but how we conduct ourselves in the classroom, how we treat our colleagues, and how we interact with students are all carefully observed by our students. Our impromptu stories and our off-handed remarks at unguarded moments all have an impact. They may learn that teachers have foibles and weaknesses. They may learn that we share certain fears and anxieties about the world. But most of all they will glean from the good teachers that they have a faith in students' abilities to grow in intellect and to exercise intelligent choices. The good teacher projects a faith in man and his abilities.

So good teachers are more than the sum of their knowledge about a subject and their strategies and abilities to convey that knowledge to students. Good teachers possess and convey a faith, no matter how contradictory, in the whole enterprise of learning, a faith in the mind and intellect as it informs the life of man and the crucial choices we face. □

Teacher As Coach

Kelli Heffernan, Civil Technology Department

Few, if any, engineering faculty members at colleges and universities nationwide are trained to be educators. Most find themselves standing in front of classrooms with little guidance in instructional methods. I, like many who came from industry to their first teaching job, found myself with the same dilemma: how to teach?

In examining teaching goals and techniques, I found it best to use something that I was familiar with. I coached youth ice hockey for a few years and found that the speed at which your players learn the skills you teach them, and the likelihood that they will perform them well in a game, is highly dependent upon the coaches skill at interacting with the players. Through various hockey clinics that I attended, I learned that coaching activities can be divided into the coach's action as (1) friend, (2) model, (3)leader and (4) teacher. I have employed what I learned in these clinics to my teaching at BCC over the last four years. Since each of the roles can be extremely complex, I offer a few guidelines:

Teacher as Friend

Much of your ability to influence your students depends on the respect and liking that they have for you. As a model, leader or teacher, the mutual respect between student and teacher forms the basis for all interactions.

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Friendship does not mean letting your students run wild in the classroom; it means executing your responsibilities in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Teacher as Model

Many successful people provide us with models of how to act if we expect to be successful and accepted. As a teacher, you become that successful person and through your actions show your students how to dress, talk and act. You teach appropriate actions not just through your lectures, but by your day to day behavior. Unfortunately, you can teach some rather bad behavior too. For example, a teacher who stresses timely completion of assignments, yet comes late or unprepared to class, teaches by example that it is okay to break rules. Your students are more likely to do what you do than what you say. Some of the best and worst teaching is by example.

(Continued on page 4)

Heffernan (from page 3)

Teacher as Leader

Progress as a leader will depend on your ability to organize, promote a positive learning atmosphere and motivate students. More specifically, always be prepared. Always compliment more than you criticize whether identifying mistakes or recognizing accomplishments. In addition, remember to continually encourage your students to strive to achieve their best.

Teacher as Teacher

The major task of teaching is to teach. This should not conflict with the previous objectives, because personal development and skill development occur together. A teacher's interaction as a friend, model, and leader should teach a student basic respect for himself, his classmates, and his teacher, thereby forming the ideal atmosphere for you to teach and for learning to take place.

In summary, I would like to remind all of us at the community college level, that many of our students are making a last ditch effort to improve the quality of their lives. Many are changing careers or finally getting that first chance at succeeding in the world. Our job as teacher is to prepare our students for future challenges by teaching them how to succeed at the highest level they can, how

Our job as teacher is to prepare our students for future challenges by teaching them how to succeed at the highest level they can.

to appreciate themselves, and how to work with others. I don't believe in the traditional views that fashion the role of a teacher as distant and unemotional. Rather, I believe that good teachers become involved not only during class time and office hours, but at any time. Let your students know that you care about their success and that you are there to help them fulfill their needs in the real world. We are all coaches in a sense; we help to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the game of life. □□

A Foundation for Good Teaching

Suzanne M. Maier, Dental Hygiene Department

Although the concept of good teaching is complex and multi-faceted, there are some very basic and easily mastered axioms an instructor can apply to assure good teaching occurs in a classroom or lab. These axioms form the foundation upon which we can build all aspects of teaching.

First and foremost is to teach the way you would like to be taught. You must convey to the students that you are interested in and care about the material being taught. The students must also derive a strong sense of concern, excitement, and importance from the delivery of the information and your contact with them. Chancellor Boyer echoes this by writing "If faculty and students do not see themselves as having important business to do together, prospects for effective learning are diminished. If students view teachers as distant and their material as irrelevant, what could be a time of exciting exploration is reduced to a series of uninspired routines." (Boyer, 1987).

Beyond this, good teaching requires extensive preparation and meticulous organization to optimize the affordable teaching time usually given to present comprehensive subject matter. Preparation is necessary to extract the important points so that they may be presented in a logical, understandable manner. Organization allows for a smooth and constant flow of material while keeping the students focused on the issues at hand. It also assures that most surprises are planned.

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Each lecture presentation must be practiced, because the lecturer, in addition to teaching, is also to some extent performing. This practice allows for changes and refinements to diagrams used to demonstrate concepts, on anticipating questions students might pose, and on finalizing thought processes used to present material. It is essential that this thorough preparation take place, so that delivery is of high quality, stimulating, challenging, and yet concise. An additional benefit is the self satisfaction of being prepared and in total control of the learning environment, and confident of the results.

Additionally, good teaching encourages students to participate in the task of thinking. As K. E. Eble notes, thinking is hard! It is rather easy for a student to write or propose a list of facts, characteristics, or qualities during a lecture or lab presentation. However, the challenge is to stimulate thinking and elevate each student's thought processes to the point where he/she is able to conceptualize and apply the information when appropriate. Boyer argues the same point by saying, "All genuine learning is active, not passive. It involves the use of the mind, not just memory." (Boyer, 1987).

Finally, good teaching is more easily accomplished when student and instructor communicate openly and freely, without confrontation, ridicule, or embarrassment. Each and every comment made by a student must be carefully considered and appropriately addressed. They must also feel that the instructor is a champion of their position and feel free to voice their academic understandings and misunderstandings. Without this exchange, the instructor will never have a clear notion of how effectively their carefully constructed instructional plan is being assimilated by the students.

(Continued on page 5)

Maier (from page 4)

Boyer, E. College : The Undergraduate Experience in America. New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

Eble, K. The Craft of Teaching. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1988.

A Good Teacher Is Not Robin Williams

Michael O'Kane, Computer Studies Department

Half-way through my second year in this profession, and still very much in the learning stage, I find it hard to subscribe to the "Seize the day!" teacher-hero model as played by Robin Williams in the film "Dead Poets Society." In my mind, a good teacher is essentially a facilitator, not a dazzling performer.

The primary role of a teacher is not, after all, to impress, but to help the students learn. When things are going well, a teacher should be transparent, a clear lens between the student and the subject. In this sense, it is the teacher's job to provide a learning environment of STRUCTURE, FOCUS, and SUPPORT.

> ... a teacher should be transparent, a clear lens between the student and the subject.

STRUCTURE is provided by careful organization and planning, with a realistic consideration of the appropriate student workload. Provide a course policy that is clear and simple to understand, with a course schedule planned to provide a steady learning curve. A good teacher is not careless with the student's time, and takes care that the course work is meaningful, relevant and engaging (everything else should be scrapped!). The course contents should engage the teacher as much as the students, and student assignments should be designed for efficient grading. A hard-working but burnt-out teacher is not much use to anyone!

FOCUS is provided in the day-to-day interaction between students and teacher. A good teacher is most of all present in the classroom. That means being alert, awake and prepared, but not over-prepared! Something gets lost when a lecture is so tight that there is no room for spontaneity. Focus also means concentrating on the important: lectures should not be too "clever", too complex, or too long. A good teacher takes time to explore and explain each new concept before moving on. Forced-feeding does not promote understanding.

SUPPORT most of all means being available to the students as individuals. Support means projecting an image of fairness. It means monitoring the progress and mood of the class as a whole, getting and giving plenty of feedback, and adjusting the pace as necessary. And support means keeping one's personal life and any personal problems well clear of students and classroom!

However, support also means self-support. A good teacher is alert to his/her own needs and well-being, and has been known to (often) take a stroll instead of grading papers. A good teacher presumably enjoys teaching; as a BCC student said to me recently, "a good teacher seems to want to be there."

Ethics and Good Teaching

Patrick O'Neil, History/Philosophy Department

Modulate your voice, write key words on the blackboard, keep eye contact with your students, employ humor, entertain questions frequently, repeat vital concepts, etc. Which one of us could not create a cookbook list of several hundred maxims for superior teaching?

Important as such techniques doubtlessly are, the heart of good teaching, it seems to me, does not consist of such like, but before all else rests in an ethical orientation which addresses such questions as: Why ought I to teach? What ought I to teach? How ought I to teach?

We all recognize an ethical dimension to the teaching profession, but too often we tend to see this in terms only of avoiding some obvious misconduct such as soliciting sexual favors or monetary bribes from students.

> ... the ethical sphere encompasses the art of teaching in its entirety...

In fact, the ethical sphere encompasses the art of teaching in its entirety, beginning, of course, with ones motivation for entering the profession: Ego-gratification? Lack of alternatives? Or, hopefully, a genuine desire to be of service to others, combined with a sincere commitment to the life of the mind?

Moral considerations occur again as one selects the material to be taught and the methods to be employed. None of us, of course, from the lowliest instructor to the most distinguished professor with tenure in an Ivy League citadel, has complete say in the nature of the material taught. Nevertheless, we all exercise a considerable degree of choice in what we present and how we present it, and it is here especially that ethical questions may be hidden by the seemingly practical. However, there is no such thing as pragmatism until the ethical has set its parameters.

We must choose what we teach not on account of what we feel most comfortable with, or what is trendy in the academic disciplines, nor even what students can most

(Continued on page 6)

(O'Neil from page 5)

painlessly digest, but what is useful for the students - useful not only in seeking employment and performing tasks in the extramural world (as in our applied sciences and career-oriented programs), but also what is useful for the life of the mind, the development of reason and the truly human life.

In selecting teaching methods, again, we cannot fall back on the claims of a pseudo-pragmatism which purports to employ what "works". For in our definition of "works" there will be enfolded the outlines of a holistic philosophy of education.

Most systems of educational philosophy "work" because they define success in accord with their own goals. We must employ methods of instruction which respect the autonomy of the student, stimulate his/her intellect, and lead him or her to participate in a fuller sense of community.

C.S. Lewis, in his fascinating The Abolition of Man, contrasted two types of education: One was that of the parent bird which feeds, cares for, and trains its young to be as it is itself - to share in the community of being with its own kind, to partake of the form of life which the adult bird has itself followed. In contrast, there is the poultry keeper. He feeds, and cares for, and even trains his birds - but for purposes they know not of. □□

Learning Teaching

Jo VanWely, Registrar

The suggestion that I submit an article on "good teaching" was intimidating. About as intimidating as walking into a BCC classroom five years ago and standing at the front. That initial step was the result of a weak moment at registration -- a new section was needed and surely I could teach the subject matter. That semester was spent two chapters ahead of the students. Now I have taught often enough, if sporadically, that the butterflies have been snugly cocooned and its time to redo material and notes.

Registrars have two views of students. We think of them en masse, 6,000+ to be registered, reported, and graded as efficiently as possible. We sigh with relief at the end of the second week of class when all are hopefully in their places and turn to planning the next semester. View two is the student with a problem so unique they end up in your office. We rarely get a chance to see the "normal" student who has minor problems with registration, achieves the Dean's list, and graduates.

Why teach? There are personal and professional benefits: (1) a real understanding of the culture of the college; (2) greater sympathy with faculty's concern over rooms and teaching resources; (3) sharing the feeling of worth when a semester is over; (4) talking to students you have taught on campus; at the grocery store, or applauding them at graduation; and, (5) a corresponding enthusiasm for my regular work which seems to have a little more meaning.

Although I've volunteered for an Anthro course or science fiction, so far I've just taught one semester of reporting writing and several of management behavior. The three most useful skills I have learned are belief, enthusiasm, and a smattering of drama. I'm blending theory with twenty-five years of work experience. As an evening adjunct my classes have high number of adult students and it is great fun to get them nodding their heads and realizing they have just learned the "official" theory or label for a real life work situation.

> When I go into the classroom I take a lot of other people with me.

When I go into the classroom I take a lot of other people with me. The best and worst of various managers and work experiences. The authors of books that have left impressions. One person who always comes with me is Jerry Harvey, author of the "Trip to Abilene" and professor of management. I walked into his classroom 13 years ago when I started my Master's and discovered there was a body of knowledge which supported half formed beliefs I had about work and organizations. My objective is to have my students feel as good about my course as I felt about his!

I also start by using the most valuable resource on campus, the faculty. I borrow material from Mid, talk about "teaching" with Fran and John, take my woes and successes to Rick, and even try out Tom's jokes. Reading the first issues of this publication has provided moments of deja vu. Yup, clarity of goals at the beginning does help. (I tell my students I want them to walk out with a toolbox of skills for use in later life.) My student and I spend the first class period "unfreezing" and introducing each other since we will be doing group work and this helps set the gravitation process. Some "mini-cases" are handed out early in the term so they can have feedback.

As a finale, I use a version of Dr. Harvey's final. From the first day of class I tell my students there will be a group final which I will discuss as the class progresses. About midway through concern mounts -- what does this mean? This is about the time we are hitting group behavior so it serves to illustrate basic points of trust, group dynamics, synergy versus social loafing (someone else will do it). I offer an option -- take it by yourself or band together as a group. Groups don't get to pick and choose and are handed 10 randomly selected essay ques-

(Continued on page 7)

VanWely (from page 6)

tions to respond to.

The class sorts themselves out. The risk-takers with basic C status clump together, hoping the random selection and extra minds will help. The high achievers form specialized study groups to ensure they keep their "A's" or upgrade their "B". They know who to pick because they have watched performance for 14 weeks. And the stubborn loner in each class takes the exam by herself, liking personal challenges. Hopefully they leave with skills which will be useful in the organizations they join.

So, these are the thoughts of a part-time instructor. By the way, while I have your attention, would any full-time faculty like to do a job exchange with me for 6 months so I could indulge myself and learn more? How about next Fall?

Make Your Lesson Important

Duane Whittaker, Physical Education

What makes good teaching? Good learning, of course. A well prepared teacher could hardly go wrong with a roomful of highly motivated good learners. The reality is, however, not all of our students are interested in our subject and that becomes our greatest challenge as teachers. We must show all of our students WHY it is important to learn what we are attempting to teach.

> ... not all of our students are interested in our subject and that becomes our greatest challenge as teachers.

Combine all the tips you have learned from educational methods courses, articles from professional journals, and ideas of your own or learned colleagues, and you should be able to keep good learners progressing. But the most expertly prepared, well presented, interesting, and entertaining lesson will not necessarily be received by those in your class who cannot connect your lesson to their lives. You must make it important to them.

Relevance is much easier to demonstrate when teaching skills, rather than longer term concepts and theories. For instance, Backpacking is a skills class with a long term goal of physical fitness. I can get my students' attention fairly easily when I want them to learn how to set up the tent to keep out the rain, or light the camp stove safely without blowing themselves up. This is relevant. It is important for them to pay attention, to watch while I demonstrate, and to question if they are still unsure. They want to learn because they don't want to sleep in a wet tent, or hurt themselves when lighting the stove. Success and reinforcement are both almost immediate.

The longer term lesson of lifetime fitness is a much more difficult concept for a nineteen year old to grasp, especially if they are athletic. It takes a great deal of imagination and ingenuity to shake them out of their smug, youthful, energetic bodies. Even the least fit youth cannot picture being over 40, overweight, out of shape, under stress, and perhaps prone to heart disease. This just isn't in their scope of belief, so I get them to draw on their own resources. I have them recall a relative, close family friend, teacher, hero or any other person with the above conditions. When they picture someone close to them with some condition it tends to be more important to them, and they find a connection to the lesson.

If you can face the challenge of motivating these unmotivated students, if you can make your lesson important, your students will do the rest.

What Is A Good Teacher?

Jack Williams, Student

My first reaction to this question was to qualify my response according to subject matter. I thought I might say that a good math teacher is this or that, a good science teacher is such and such, and so on and so forth. But after those initial thoughts, I found that the subject matter wasn't the important thing. The important thing was the way in which the teacher did the teaching.

I have heard this question before, and each time that I heard it, I heard some respond, "Oh, that teacher is easy.", while others say, "That teacher is hard." I find that a student's perception of a teacher as being good or bad is, in large part, dependent upon the grade which the student may have received in the course. So, quite naturally, a student may be led to believe that "easy" is good and "hard" equals bad. This type of reasoning, though, is not a fair criterion on which to judge a teacher.

Each student, without regard to a teacher being easy or hard, and with no emphasis based on the grade, has to look at what he/she came away with from the course.

> Each student ... has to look at what he/she came away with from the course.

Did he/she come away with an understanding of the subject matter and how it may relate to real life, and his/her career? Did the teacher stimulate interest, or merely write the answers on the board saying, "This is it." An all important part of getting a college education is learning how to think for yourself. Some people go through an entire lifetime never learning that. They need, and want, to be told what to do and how to think. A good teacher teaches people how to think for themselves.

(Continued on page 8)

Aside

Claire Ligeikis Clayton, Nursing Department

When I attend conferences, I usually have wonderful intentions of sharing the pearls I have discovered. But, so often we come back to our busy schedules and, unfortunately, find the conference information shifts to the bottom of the "things to do" pile. Eventually, if we wait long enough, it finds itself filed away.

After attending the 12th annual International Conference on Teaching Excellence in Austin, Texas in May of 1990, I decided to share some of the pearls before filing my folders away. Maybe we've heard all these tips before, but it sure helps to bring them to the forefront, so that we can be better at our teaching.

Presentations PLUS

Planning your Lecture

+ Start on time.

+ Design an opening: State the objective of your lecture. Students need to know - "What's in this for me?"

+ Outline the body of the lecture - don't read!

+ Design the closing: Your entire presentation is no better than your closing statement. Students will remember last what you said last. Don't end with "That's all --- any questions?"

Learning Through Audio Visuals

+ "I hear and forget, I see and remember, I do and understand."

+ Knowledge comes 75% through seeing; 13% through hearing; and 12% through smelling, tasting, and touching.

+ Folks forget 75% of what they've heard within 24 hours.

+ AV's should be neat, attractive, well done; "Made at home is okay."; Worst AV - black and white typewritten page; Lettering on AV material should be 1" tall for every 15 feet of distance; the blackboard is the favorite AV at Harvard Business School - use colored chalk.

+ Don't misspell.

Undesirables

+ Undesirable Characteristics of the Teacher
Sarcastic, has favorites, aloof, not friendly.

+ Desirable Characteristics of the Teacher
Cooperative, democratic, kind, considerate, praising, interested in student problems, wide interests, can explain or clarify.

+ Of all the above characteristics, only one had to do with subject matter. People want to learn from teachers who care.

Spice

+ Most people speak 150-200 words per minute. The human mind can comprehend 600 words per minute. This means there is idle time and the mind will drift off and wander.

+ Research has also shown the mind can concentrate for approximately 8 minutes at a time. To help your students remember key points, and keep the mind from wandering. Interject "spice" every 8 minutes.

+ If it's natural for you add humor, tell jokes relevant to the subject matter, and tell stories about yourself.

PS - There were over 150 presentations to choose form relating to teaching excellence, and I would highly recommend this conference to any interested faculty member.

If you would like further information please contact me in the Nursing Department, F107, extension 5060.

Williams (from page 7)

If this is not the case, you, as teacher, should re-evaluate your method of sharing your knowledge. On the other hand, if you are the kind of teacher that gives your students the power to develop original thought, and keeps them thinking long into the future - much like a good book - then I say that you need not worry about being a good teacher...you already are one.

Coming Next Issue

With academic advising just around the corner, next month's issue will explore how advising is done at BCC. The issue will also have articles written by some people who get to know your students outside the classroom: club advisors. Writers will include: Alan Bennett, Tom Carter, Ed Dougherty, Michael Kinney, Roger McVannan, Kurt Nelson, Susan Ohrablo, and John Pierog.

Center Stage is published monthly in cooperation with the Professional Development Committee.

Send correspondence and contributions to the editor:

Paul O'Heron
Mathematics Department, T-215
Phone : 771-5232
E-Mail : OHERON_P (All-in-One)

Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 1 Number 6 *March 15, 1991*

This month's articles center on how we, as a faculty and as an institution, interact with our students. The emphasis is not, however, on what we do inside the classroom, but on how we deal with our students outside the classroom. The articles are segregated into two categories, those dealing with academic advising, and those dealing with club advising and helping students on a more personal basis. Enjoy! -- ed.

Contents :

Advising Students?
-- Edward Dougherty, page 1

Academic Advising: The Ideal and the Real
-- Roger McVannan, page 2

Towards More Consistent Advising
-- Tamara Byron, page 8

A Holistic Approach to Advising Students with Developmental Needs
-- Susan Ohrablo, page 8

A Brief History of the Origin of Student Affairs
-- John Pierog, page 3

BCC Intramurals
-- Tom Carter, page 3

The Health and Wellness Resource Center
-- Mary Ligouri, page 4

Advising Student Clubs
-- Alan Bennett, page 5

Teaching Music: Sharing and Becoming
-- Michael Kinney, page 6

Advising the Ski Club
-- Kurt Nelson, page 7

Helping Students Outside the Classroom
-- Steven Natale, page 9

Aside: Another View on Good Teaching
-- page 10

Advising Students?

Edward Dougherty, Chairperson, Civil Technology

The office phone rings. The Admissions Office for the Counseling Center is calling; someone has dropped in and wants to know some specifics about the Civil Engineering Technology program. Other times it is a prospective student or the parent of a young scholar. Perhaps the student has already selected the program and now wants to know if Algebra will be a necessary math skill to solve problems in the curriculum. All of these "calls to advise" are taken seriously by this chair.

I have found that most prospective students are not wondering if they should choose Civil Engineering Technology for a major. Rather they are wondering if they should go into engineering technology at all. Generally, I address all these inquiries with an approach that begins with a few generalizations. I state that the Civil curriculum at BCC is a broad-based program, that our program strengths exist in four areas or clusters: Surveying, Architecture/CAD, Construction Support Courses, and Structural Design Concepts.

I frequently state, with emphasis, that if you are sure you only want a program in Surveying, then don't come to BCC; if you want a program in Architecture/CAD, then don't come to BCC. My immediate follow-up is a reminder that it can be a shattering experience to put in a

> My immediate follow-up is a reminder that it can be shattering experience to ... discover that you really don't like that discipline.

few years of academic struggle, lose wages and pay tuition for a single-dimensional program and then discover that you really don't like that discipline. Thus a broad-based Civil curriculum allows a student to consider associated careers in four rather diverse areas. This versatility should appeal to any young adult who has 35 working years facing her/him.

At this point, my approach is to offer some additional comments on the actual courses making up the four clusters. A reminder is issued that it is mandatory to take course work in all four areas. This is the bad news - good news story line for some. The good-news viewpoint is that

(Continued on page 2)

Dougherty (from page 1)

even if the student dislikes the Surveying course cluster, they need not work in that phase of the business. All is not lost. That body of knowledge (bearings, asimuths, topography, mapping) is very useful to the Architectural/CAD cluster and/or the Construction support cluster. Likewise the Structural concepts cluster supports the interests of Architecture and Construction. The Architecture/CAD cluster forces students to conceive and draw the details of how things go together. That is very useful orientation in the Construction cluster. The clusters are supportive of one another, and many times this exciting image did not exist in the minds of the unacquainted.

When and if the moment requires a poignant, space-age perspective, I remind the student that all space stations need to be structurally designed by Civil Engineers. This same structural analysis is done on the launch vehicle and on the foundation site used for launch. Computers and CAD are part of the versatile Civil degree.

There is also another approach that I term passive advisement.

There is also another approach that I term passive advisement. This is accomplished by other people and techniques. Nevertheless, it is important and effective. Passive approaches include the advisement efforts made by parents and/or relatives, alumni efforts, neighbor influence, TV advertisements, and lastly, the high school instructor who encourages the technical career. I must admit some exasperation with the inadequate information provided by the high school guidance departments. Couple that frustration with the lack of foresight on the part of too many high school students to prepare themselves for a career that doesn't have a bouncing ball associated with it.

In closing, this column was not written as a student recruitment effort. I hope the specifics have some potential value in showing the importance of a unified approach to advising. □□

Academic Advising: The Ideal and the Real

Roger McVannan, Assistant to the Dean LGS

When we are describing aspects of culture in the author's introductory sociology course, we consider what some of the ideal cultural beliefs are and what people actually do, i.e., "Thou shalt not..." while most of us have done the opposite, at least, like Jimmy Carter, in our minds.

In a similar manner, we can look at our academic advising models gathered from seminars, courses, books, in-service programs, or wherever, and come forth with great-sounding and probably very useful commandments about what, how, and when to do each in the process. For example, here is a list of desired characteristics about the type of academic advisor one should be. The list is from American College Testing Program (ACT) Academic Advising resource documents as presented at a conference this writer attended several years ago.

Characteristics of the Effective Advisor

·Interested in advising.
·Demonstrates a concerned and caring attitude toward advisees.
·Exhibits effective interpersonal and communication skills.
·Available to advisees.
·Frequent contact with advisees.
·Intrusive behavior with advisees.
·Knowledgeable of institutional regulations, policies, offerings, and procedures.
·Monitors student progress.
·Uses appropriate information sources.
·Refers when necessary.
·Supports advisor development programs.
·Engages in developmental advising versus simply course scheduling.

If we possessed the above characteristics, we seemingly would be advisors of the highest level. And some are. But for most of us, the reality falls anywhere from a tad short of the ideal to very deficient in advising skills and/or commitments. [Note: these observations relate to my experiences with the academic advising process in the Liberal and General Studies (LGS) Division, not college-wide, although on occasion some questionable scheduling for other divisions' students is noticed when all-college data is looked at.]

Then what are some of the realities which fall short of the commandments for good academic advising as seen from the writer's LGS perspective? Fundamentally they

First, certain faculty fail to consider the activity as the important task it is.

are two-sided. First, certain faculty fail to consider the activity as the important task it is. Second, the administrative support needed to make the process as functional as possible is not there. A brief look at each aspect is needed.

When a faculty member fails to make him/herself familiar with the intricacies of the advisee's degree programs, including the changes which have been occurring in these programs, errors will be - and are - made. We all occasionally err in the process, but ignoring required courses, whether they be degree core ones or pre-requisites for others, makes a sham of the design which when set

(Continued on page 7)

A Brief History of the Origin of "Student Affairs"

John J. Pierog, Vice President for Student Affairs

I was pleased to hear that this issue of "Center Stage" would include information about various areas of the Student Affairs Division. I would like to offer a brief history of the evolution of Student Affairs in American higher education.

I would venture to say that most of us probably went to college under an old student affairs model where there was a Dean of Men and a Dean of Women to handle discipline concerns who would also double as a counselor. (These were the times when the problematic nature between being a counselor and a disciplinarian was not fully understood.) The proliferation of state and federal Financial Aid programs had not yet begun so there were no large Financial Aid offices and the entire Placement operation was limited to a bulletin board where the dean's secretary posted job notices that the college had received. A great deal has changed since then.

> ... and underscored the shared responsibility all members of the institution have in educating the whole student.

Historically, Teachers College, Columbia University is credited with development of the first formal program of study in the Student Affairs area. They began this new curriculum in 1916 after recognizing the importance of colleges having qualified and trained professionals to provide services to students. The American Council on Education (ACE) recognized the increasing need for qualified professional staff to assist students in areas outside of the classroom. An ACE study resulted in the development and publication of the 1937 document entitled "The Student Personnel Point of View". This document discussed the function and role of Student Affairs, emphasized the importance of coordination of services within the institution and underscored the shared responsibility all members of the institution have in educating the whole student. Essentially, with a few modifications to this document in 1949, it served as the philosophical foundation, rationale and model for the Student Affairs field.

In 1986, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators commissioned a panel to reexamine the ACE document and to develop a statement which would set forth the assumptions and purposes of Student Affairs work. With this task completed, Student Affairs professionals have a document which further identifies how their function and purpose is grounded to those of the institution.

Though Student Affairs tasks are divided up into functional areas of specialization (Financial Aid, Health Services, Admissions) Student Affairs professionals must learn the specialty they are responsible for administering and must also have the appropriate academic and experiential background to serve their campuses as student development specialists. They have a dual responsibility for keeping up-to-date with both their functional specialization and their generalist responsibilities.

In general, ours has been the responsibility of articulating student needs and desires, their complex problems, their hopes and aspirations and in providing leadership to a community of scholars in developing an appropriate environment to foster student development. Though this can be, and often is, a complex and challenging role, we are and must remain, full partners with our professional colleagues in the classroom who can help us achieve our mission. For everything that occurs on our campus is, or should be, aimed at moving students from one end of their developmental axis to another. □□

BCC Intramurals

Tom Carter, Intramurals Coordinator and Fitness Center Supervisor

The BCC Intramural Program is designed to offer a variety of activities for the students at Broome Community College.

The interests of the student come first and foremost. The program offers any activity in which students show an interest. Those activities which attract a large number

> The interests of the student come first and foremost.

of students have structured play in a league form. Basketball has been the most popular by far, with over 100 students participating in the league each year since intramurals was revived in 1984. We run 5-on-5 full-court from September to April, as well as the popular 3-point, slam-dunk, and free throw shooting contests every March. Championship teams are crowned at the end of a playoff each semester. In May we hold the popular All-Star game, where an intramural all-star team is selected, and plays the BCC Varsity. Last season the level of play in intramurals was high enough to allow the intramural team to win in front of 200 spectators in the Baldwin Gym. Afterwards a pizza and soda party was thrown for participants and spectators alike.

Off and on, league play has been offered in football, volleyball and soccer as well. And, occasionally, students seek to play some other activities such as badminton, bowling, golf, or tennis.

(Continued on page 4)

Carter (from page 3)

The program also provides an opportunity for free play. The gyms are open to simply shoot baskets. Footballs, frisbees, hackeysacks, and tennis rackets are provided for unstructured use by the students. Again we simply try to accommodate any interest the student may have and provide the opportunity to play.

Students also have an opportunity to work in the program. Work study students check student ID's at the gym doors and students are hired to referee and keep score of intramural contests. This gives the student an opportunity not only to earn money but to learn a sense of responsibility in job performance. This can be an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for them.

> Unlike in a class room situation, students are there on a voluntary basis and you have the opportunity to offer your influence and guidance.

I, as director of intramurals, feel that working in the program brings you close to the students. Unlike in a class room situation, students are there on a voluntary basis and you have the opportunity to offer your influence and guidance. They are very receptive and I almost find myself taking on the role of a guidance counselor in an effort to steer students in a good direction. It seems to be very beneficial as the students feed off those offerings.

We strive to provide a conducive atmosphere where the student can receive a good all-around positive experience. Extensive efforts have been made in the last three years to recruit student involvement in the program. It seems to have paid off as more students have become involved recently.

Although the activities have taken place mainly during the day, the program offers an opportunity for evening participation in such activities as soccer, open recreation, and weight training. Free weights were just recently provided in the college weight room and fitness center. The weight room and fitness center are open until 7:30 every night to provide for after school use for those students whose schedules won't allow for day-time participation.

All in all, students seem to appreciate the program and enjoy themselves. We try to run a program which meets their interests and needs, and gives them the benefits of a complete, all-around recreational, as well as, educational experience. □□

The Health and Wellness Resource Center

Mary Ligouri, Director of Health Services

A typical day in the life of the Health & Wellness Resource Center staff: The door opens...a student says " I don't feel so good. I think I am going to be sick". The student sits down next to the Nurse's desk and the Nurse whips out the garbage can. The rest is history.

Following that episode, several foreign students come in requesting information on required MMR immunizations. The Secretary turns around and asks who speaks Russian.

Several requests for blood pressure screening, strep tests, Tylenol, health information on weight management, high blood pressure, how to stop smoking, AIDS, guest lecturer, when is the doctor in, etc. Jeff Stoughton, Health Educator, prepares for a program on campus. The phone rings and a voice on the other end says, "I have chest pain...."

The Health and Wellness Resource Center (formerly known as Health Services) is a Department of the Student Affairs Division and is located in Wales 103. As a student support service office, our purpose and goals are reflective of our "wellness" philosophy.

Wellness is an approach to health that aims to reduce the risk of serious illness. Why wellness? Because the way we live has a lot to do with our health. Unhealthy lifestyles can cause life-threatening conditions such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and even death. Eighty percent (80%) of "lifestyle diseases" can be prevented by early identification of health risk factors and through preventive education.

Health risk factors are habits or conditions that increase one's chance of developing a lifestyle disease. A single risk factor like smoking can be dangerous to your health, but when combined with other risk factors such as high blood pressure, alcohol abuse, drugs, stress, poor nutrition, or lack of fitness, your health risk rises. Preventive education is one means to reduce such health risks. To paraphrase an old cliche, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of protection."

> We are committed to enhancing the student's general well-being and knowledge of health ...

Preventive education is a major thrust of the H&WRC through individual health counseling and educational programs offered to the general student population throughout the academic year. During the past academic year, we have provided preventive education programs on such topics as AIDS, Substance Abuse, Stress Management, Domestic Violence, Acquaintance Rape, Women's Health Issues, and MMR Immunizations to some 5700 students.

We are committed to enhancing the student's gen-

(Continued on page 5)

Ligouri (from page 4)

eral well-being and knowledge of health and to provide clinical services as needed to enable the student to maintain their academic studies without disruption due to an untimely illness.

In addition to preventive education, the H&WRC serves the student's health-care needs on a one-to-one basis in the clinic area, also located in Wales 103. This year the health clinic processed 6500 health/immunization records, gave 1100 MMR immunizations, and provided hands-on-care for an additional 3900 students in our nurse/physician based clinic setting, including individualized health-care programs for the International Student population (ie., reviewing health status for immunizations).

The H&WRC is open Monday through Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm. Clinic services include treatment for illnesses and injuries, medical emergency care, health screening, lab testing including strep and pregnancy tests, referrals to other health-care providers as needed, health education and counseling, dispensing prescriptions as needed, and immunizations. Physician's hours are Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00am to Noon. There is a Registered Nurse on duty during the open hours of the clinic.

If you would like to know more about services provided by the Health and Wellness Resource Center or would like to have our Department develop a health-related program for you please contact Mary Ligouri or Jeff Stoughton at ext. 5181.

Advising Student Clubs

Alan Bennett, Counseling Center

It was a cold, snowy Saturday morning in early November when I left BCC with two rental vans full of international students bound for a day trip to Ithaca and a visit to Cornell University. As the advisor to the International Student Organization, I had arranged for a 10:00 visit to Cornell starting with a tour of the campus, lunch with Cornell international students, and a visit to the bookstore and art museum. The afternoon was to be spent in the downtown commons and would end with a visit to the state park and a glimpse of the beautiful gorges. It was a great plan and the students were all eagerly awaiting their first day trip of the semester.

Unfortunately the day did not go as planned. We were over a half an hour late in leaving the campus as the other driver had left her driver's license at the van rental place in Endwell. We had to go back to get the driver's license, then back to get the vans, and then pick up the students at the college. The next delay came in Whitney Point when the van began bucking and red lights lit up on the dash board. Not being mechanically inclined, I was at odds as to what to do with this "ill" van. One student said it was the fan belt, another thought it was the transmission, and yet another was certain we were out of gas! Since

> One student said it was the fan belt, another thought it was the transmission ...

the transmission fluid level measured empty I bought some transmission fluid, called my colleague at Cornell to say we were delayed, and set off to Cornell at 20 mph, barely making it up the hills for lack of power. (The transmission fluid didn't solve the problem!)

We finally arrived at Cornell at 11:30 and met the tour guides. I left the students with the Cornell club advisor and headed off downtown to find a qualified mechanic to repair the van for its return trip home. The howling wind and 15 degree temperature did not seem to damper the students' spirit, but mine was beginning to waiver. After an hour of combing Ithaca for a garage, I finally found someone who identified the problem but could not fix it given the hour and day of the week. He did locate a van rental in Ithaca and I called the Endwell rental agency and told them about their broken van and my intention to rent another van to get the students home. They told be that they were not responsible for the broken van and would not pay for another rental. After regaining my composure, I told them I would rent another van, leave theirs in Ithaca and was coming home and bringing the students with me. They finally agreed to drive one of their vans (which, strangely enough, had just become available) to Ithaca so we would have a safe and functioning van to get us home. They told me they would meet me at the garage where I took their van.

I then headed back to Cornell to tell the students what was going on but had difficulty locating them as it was well after 2:00. My colleague at Cornell told me that the students were in the infirmary waiting for one of our students to be released. One of the girls had fainted while having lunch and was taken to the infirmary. The nurse said that the walking tour in the frigid weather and the warmth of the lunch room could have brought on the fainting spell. After some rest, our student was doing fine and could leave.

I explained the van situation to the students and we all waited for our replacement van to arrive. After waiting some time we were finally ready to go with the safe and sound vans. None of these setbacks seemed to bother the students and after some persuasion I agreed to stop off for a short visit at the downtown commons. After some hot chocolate at a downtown restaurant we set off for home. Oh yes - we did stop at the state park and saw the gorge lit up by the van headlights! Because we were off schedule by about four hours at this point, when we finally arrived

(Continued on page 6)

(Bennett from page 5)
back at BCC it was too late for the students to get the BC transit so we dropped them off at their apartments. Then we returned the vans to Endwell and I arrived home in Montrose at about 10:00. It was not easy to answer my wife's question - "How was the trip?"

When I was asked to write an article about being a club advisor, explaining the benefits of how I got to know students better and how they got to see me in a different role, I had to think long and hard. I came up with this experience which I surely will not forget. The students enjoyed the trip despite the setbacks. I know it was worse for me than for them. The reality of club advising is that it involves extra time, time away from home, and time spent in late afternoon club meetings discussing fund-raising events and off-campus outings.

> Although at times it may seem frustrating and time-consuming to advise student groups, my experience tells me that it is well worth the effort.

Although at times it may seem frustrating and time-consuming to advise student groups, my experience tells me that it is well worth the effort. For the students, taking part in a club organization is an invaluable experience. They learn how to organize, create committees, work together, and take on responsibility. They also have a good time doing it. Without a faculty advisor none of this would be possible.

I believe that this part of the college experience is just as important as time spent in a classroom. We have a small campus and it seems that this aspect of college life - the faculty advising of student clubs - is taken on by the same small group of faculty. I hope other members of the faculty find the time to advise a student club in order to enable students to experience this important aspect of college life.

Teaching Music: Sharing and Becoming

Michael Kinney, Music Department

I have been involved in teaching music to students in and outside of the formal classroom for nineteen years. When asked to describe the positive benefits of these types of experiences, I find it both an easy and difficult task.

How do I begin to convey to someone the bonding which takes place when a choir or band rehearses music for countless hours during many months to perform it as perfectly as possible? The preparation of music for a concert requires the deepest commitment to excellence, discipline, and the highest of possible standards. The understanding that the end result will be a product of a synergism which can only be accomplished by each individual's best effort places an incumbent responsibility on every person in the group and generates pride, compassion, sentience, and an esprit de corps.

How can I relay the bonding which occurs between myself and my students as I transport groups of them to The Syracuse Opera performances, Ithaca College concerts, or to Lincoln Center to hear one of the world's finest orchestras perform music by one of the world's greatest composers? In these instances, I have extended the vantage points of my students' perspective on the riches life has to offer. I have given them something which they will forever carry with them as they reflect on their college experiences. I have also bonded with them in ways which are impossible to do in the classroom. Trips such as these have allowed me to discuss, in a very informal and personal way, their families, interests and future plans.

Music is a seductive art. In order to perform it (with that spark of divinity), students and teachers alike must discover a great deal of who they are. Many ego defense mechanisms must be temporarily set aside. In some cases set aside forever. I have seen the beauty of creating music with my students as a way of what I call "soul-touching." Anyone who has experienced the "highs" of musical per-

> The real beauty is the fact that the music created is the result of a combined effort between the teacher and the student.

formance will understand what is implied by this. The real beauty is the fact that the music created is the result of a combined effort between the teacher and the student. The mutual respect developed is evident in the smiles, handshakes, and hugs shared after a performance.

I have found that creating music with my students, in or out of the classroom, has been a vehicle for the type of creative expression that the humanist psychologists such as Maslow, May, Rogers, Jung, Adler and Fromm agree contributes to "self-actualization." I cannot think of a more important role for a teacher than in helping students discover who they are and what they might become. I have witnessed the deepest and most profound of human emotions and creative expression manifest itself through the performance of music.

Preparing music for concerts, taking trips to hear performances, advising students on how to play or sing better, writing out songs they are trying to compose, locating recordings of the music we performed together, and providing students ways to engender creative expression, are experiences which happen primarily outside of the formal learning situation. I am unsure of exactly what these experiences mean to students, but I know they have

(Continued on page 7)

Kinney (from page 6)

affected me.

I can recall the names and faces of virtually all of the students with whom I have interacted outside of the classroom. Some of them continue to write and telephone me and apprise me of their latest musical experiences as well as recall any encouraging comments I made to them.

> I feel very fortunate that the greater part of my life's work has affected people in such positive ways.

I feel very fortunate that the greater part of my life's work has affected people in such positive ways. I try to bring those successful feelings into the classroom. As I face each new class at the beginning of the semester, I know that the students are not students at all, but rather people needing encouragement, structure, discipline, respect, and a developing sense of self-worth. I have found that the activities outside of the classroom have had a positive effect on my students and have allowed me to appreciate how wonderfully woven the fabric between a student and teacher can become. □□

Advising the Ski Club

Kurt Nelson, Audio-Visual Department

Since I graduated from BCC in 1987, my life has improved with each passing year, the biggest improvement being my employment with the Audio-Visual Department. I believe that students should not be intimidated by faculty or staff, so after working with students in the AV TV Studio during the semester, I thought the next step would be to volunteer to work with students outside the classroom.

Being a co-advisor for the ski club allows me to ski down groomed trails both with friends and with students. Volunteering during the holidays is a good way to spend the vacation and maybe affect someone in a positive way. There is a high level of responsibility, as skiing can be a very dangerous sport and I tell my students, as in life, stress safety first, then fun and learning. (Although I have found that while safety has to be learned, fun comes as second nature.)

I hope that all the students on our ski trips arrive home safely, have fun skiing, and are ready to return to your classrooms ready to learn.

I also hope that other faculty and staff with special interests take the time to make a positive change in student's lives. Students do appreciate your time out of the classroom, and will talk about the experience for years to come. □□

McVannan (from page 2)

forth was intended to academically benefit students. There is sympathy toward advisors as we change mathematics remedial courses, add writing emphasis requirements, set forth a mandatory values course, mandate a civic education subject, and say that half the physical education credit be of cardiovascular nature. Additionally, to be sure that one's advisees have needed courses for transfer to some specific college(s) makes the task even more demanding.

> "Hey, this has become just too complicated. I can't do it."

An advisor may well be tempted to tell him/herself, "Hey, this has become just too complicated. I can't do it." The advisee(s) then is sent to the division office because "they" know what to do. A cop-out? Maybe, but an understandable one, although the division office may have all it can handle and does need faculty help in the job.

The college administration could commit itself more strongly to improving the academic advising process. This might then convince more faculty that this is a vital concern and better advisement would result.

It is a year and a half since some of us went to Rochester to learn about a process involving computer-based auditing of student's degree requirements. It is a very fine program, one which will greatly simplify advisor's determining of what courses are still needed for completion of advisee's programs. But implementation of this degree audit is far from reality in the LGS Division because the commitment of personnel time has not been made, seemingly telling us it is not as high on the administrative priority list as might be wished to significantly aid our advising tasks.

And as we in the LGS continue to have full-time lines unfilled while student enrollment climbs, we have fewer and fewer advisors for more and more students. Adjuncts don't advise; they are not hired for that. This again says something about the college's commitment to the academic advising function.

> Academic Advising is the only structured service on campus in which all students have the opportunity for ongoing, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution.

We close with this observation, which we would have those whose attitudes and actions toward the process have created a reality further from the ideal than might be wished, consider: Academic Advising is the only structured service on campus in which all students have the opportunity for ongoing, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution. □□

Towards More Consistent Advising

Tamara Byron, Student

While standing in line to register for this semester there was, of course, ample time to chat. The topic of advisement came up and those of us in line together were astonished at what disparate experiences each of us had had.

One woman went to her advisor's office, was given the forms, told to pick her courses, and return for the advisor's signature; no input or assistance whatsoever. When she went to register for her courses, she found out the courses she had chosen were at conflicting times. In contrast, another person had an advisor who'd always gone to great lengths to help him choose courses and juggle his tight schedule. The advisor even contacted chairpersons for approval of courses outside his curriculum.

The sessions I've had with my advisor fall somewhere between these two experiences. In the scheduled fifteen minutes I told him about the courses I selected, and he checked for degree requirements and scheduling conflicts. Overall adequate, if perfunctory.

I realize that advising students is probably more difficult in some curricula than others, but perhaps a greater effort is called for to ensure uniformity in quality and an acceptable level of cooperation between the parties.

I have discussed this topic with a few faculty members, and I gather that they are, for the most part, apprised of what forms to use, where to sign and send them, and are then essentially abandoned to perform as best as they can. One professor expressed the view (not her own), that at the community college level perhaps more thorough advisement isn't important or necessary.

Coping with collegiate red tape is difficult, and at times overwhelming to all students, adult and recent high school graduates, as well. Certainly ultimate responsibility rests with the student. But a good, friendly, knowledgeable advisor would go a long way towards ensuring these difficulties do not completely discourage the prospective student. □□

Quoted

"If a Child Seems To Need Help, Seem To Help Him."

-- the title of a book designed by a group of teachers attending a less than effective summer institute that was intending to make them more sensitive to children's needs. From Jim Seymour's The Corporate Micro, PC Week, February 25, 1991.

A Holistic Approach to Advising Students with Developmental Needs

Susan Ohrablo, Counseling Center

As academic advisor to the "modified program," I am responsible for the advisement of approximately 250 students each year. These students have demonstrated, through the placement tests, a need to build skills in the area of college textbook reading.

Within this population, there is a great diversity. There may be students who have completed an eighth-grade education and have not been in school for twenty-five years, as well as students fresh out of high school who maintained "C" averages. Since there is such diversity, it is essential to advise each student individually and create a schedule which will meet their needs and interests both academically and personally.

> I would like to outline a typical advisement session, ... and explain the rationale ...

I would like to outline a typical advisement session, which lasts an hour, and explain the rationale for its structure.

1. Discuss with the student his/her choice of major and/or career. What does the student have in mind? What is our program designed to offer? Is there agreement? Important here is discussion of transfer versus career-track programs and verification that the student is pursuing the appropriate line of study. As a counselor, I listen for indecision or uncertainty and offer career counseling if necessary. The student is informed that he/she has options, and is not "locked-in" to a program of study.

2. "Nuts and Bolts" Explanation. Each student is given a catalog. We work from the outline of the student's chosen curriculum. Before discussing courses, I break down the components of the outline, including definitions of "semester," "credit hours," and "two-year program." This may seem elementary and unnecessary for the general college population, but I have found that most students possess limited or inaccurate knowledge of these terms which we consider a part of our native language. For example, many students think "two-year program" means that they have no option but to complete in two years. Others are surprised to find that there are two separate semesters in an academic year. Most students have no idea how credits relate to hours invested. So, to ask a student whether he/she intends to study full-time or part-time without explaining the implications often leads to confusion and frustration on the part of the student.

3. Placement Test Results. I explain why the student was given these exams and what we are trying to

(Continued on page 9)

Ohrablo (from page 7)

ascertain with the results. I review each score and subsequent recommendation and ask the student if he/she agrees with it. This is especially helpful when discussing the non-credit, developmental courses. The student is given a voice in the decision-making process and enters these courses enthusiastically, knowing how he/she can benefit from each.

4. Developing a Schedule. Factors taken into account are: Which is student's most difficult subject? When is student most alert? Any history of sleeping through morning classes? Skipping late afternoon classes? Have to get a child off to a sitter? The student chooses which class times will best meet his/her needs, and this maximizes the chance for successful attendance and performance.

> Overall, I stress student participation and decision-making.

Overall, I stress student participation and decision-making. I also want students to start considering options and taking responsibility for their choices. Students and advisors both must understand that academic advising is not limited to filling out a data form. □□

Helping Students Outside The Classroom

Steven Natale

"Why don't students come to my office for help? I tell them I'm available after class or during my office hours, and I know by the looks on their faces that they don't grasp all of the material, but they still don't come to see me!"

An article entitled "Help" in the February issue of The Teaching Professor addresses this frustration shared by many teachers. According to Stuart A. Karabenick, the reasons students do not seek help are tied in with self-image: they do not want to appear "inadequate or intellectually suspect." Karabenick also cites studies which show that when students do go for help, they are likely to look for it in informal settings "before they turn to more formal structures."

> Informal settings where students can obtain the academic help they need take several shapes on BCC's campus.

Informal settings where students can obtain the academic help they need take several shapes on BCC's campus. Two of the newest versions come out of the TEC Division. The Departments of Engineering Science/Physics and Mathematics have established academic assistance programs in which faculty come to the students. Over half of the ES/P faculty, including some adjunct instructors, donate one office hour a week to staff a 'help table' in the Atrium of the AT Building. "We did this some years ago," says Jack Foster, "and then in the middle of the Fall semester, 1990, Joe Biegen resurrected the idea. We chose the Atrium because we wanted to make it easily accessible to the students."

Foster stresses that the table, which is staffed approximately 12 hours a week, is for academic help only; students with questions on advisement or other matters are referred to the Department Office. Jack emphasizes the informality of the setting where teachers feel no pressure to help with unfamiliar subjects: "If a faculty member can't help with a particular course, we refer the student to the appropriate instructor's schedule." Joe Biegen reports that faculty staffing the table have been very busy and that students have reacted positively to the idea. The fact that the 'Help' table is in the Atrium, a very public place, helps to make it clear that getting academic help is a normal thing. It also challenges the cultural norm of individualism - another factor which helps to explain students' reluctance to ask for help - which is represented in the idea that it's always best to "do it yourself."

This Spring the Mathematics Department began a similar program in the Math Lab in the Learning Assistance Center (LAC). All the fulltime Math faculty members, and a few adjuncts, spend one office hour a week in the lab during the busy hours of 9am - 2pm. Morton Goldberg has also asked Math faculty to announce to their own students the hours when they will be in the lab. In this way, Math teachers can focus on helping their own students as well as students in other classes. Dave Michalak, Coordinator of the Math Lab, has noticed a significant increase in student usage during the hours when faculty are there. This setting is also informal: students often work in pairs or groups, and instructors circulate, answering questions or explaining concepts to students. Watching students working together in this lab, one is struck by the fact that students are very relaxed; they appear not to feel the embarrassment and anxiety which Karabenick says can keep so many of them from obtaining the assistance they need.

> Dave Michalak, Coordinator of the Math Lab, has noticed a significant increase in student usage during the hours when faculty are there.

Other types of programs have been set up around specific courses and even certain assignments. The Supplemental Instruction Program, for example, targets courses which tend to be difficult for students. A well-trained student leader conducts regularly scheduled study sessions in which students apply appropriate study skills and techniques to the material. In another informal setting in

(Continued on page 10)

Aside

The following is excerpted and summarized from Total Quality Management In the Classroom: Listen to Your Customers, Ronald Higgins, David Jenkins, and Robert Lewis. Engineering Education, January/February 1991. A complete copy of the article is on file in the Teaching Resources Center.

The U.S. Army School of Engineering and Logistics has an on going instructor improvement program. As part of that program the faculty are encouraged to maintain a continual dialogue with their students. A list of the student's top ten characteristics that define good instruction was distilled from the gathered information. Faculty were also encourage to offer their opinion.

The ten most frequently occurring student and faculty definitions of good instruction are reproduced, in order of importance, below.

According to students:

- ·Organized and prepared
- ·Simple, straightforward instruction with complete examples
- ·Good communication/pronunciation
- ·Real-life applications/analogies
- ·Sound knowledge of subject matter
- ·Open to questions during and after class
- ·Goals clearly stated at the beginning
- ·Interested in subject
- ·Lots of examples
- ·Logical order, avoids tangents

According to Faculty:

- ·Organized and prepared
- ·Sound knowledge of subject matter
- ·Fair and consistent grading
- ·Enthusiastic
- ·Concern for all students
- ·Goals clearly stated at the beginning
- ·Real-life applications/analogies
- ·Flexible
- ·Good communication/pronunciation
- ·Interested in subject

Many times we assume everyone knows what good eductional practices are and follows them accordingly. A most important and often forgotten part of the educational process is listening to the customer. Although faculty do not always have to respond to what their customers say, they should know what they consider important. Without this knowledge we operate in our own little world without adequate consideration for those we are trying to educate or for those who will employ our graduates. □□

Natale (from page 9)

the LAC, students discuss their writing in individual tutorials and small group meetings with Writing Center faculty and peer tutors. After coming to the LAC for more structured activities - such as the Research Paper Workshop or small group workshops conducted in specific Math and Social Science courses - students often feel comfortable enough to form their own study groups in the LAC, or explore the LAC's other services.

The potential exists for faculty and students to engage in a variety of informal, but effective, learning activities. If you're interested in such a possibility, and I can be of assistance, contact the LAC at 771-5038. □□

Coming Next Issue

An Invitation

Paul O'Heron, Editor

I have been asked recently, "How do you get the writers for Center Stage?" Well, basically, I ask people I deal with occasionally, or who are recommended to me by the people I deal with. While this method supplies me with writers, after a little thought I decided it also leaves out that segment of the campus population who I do not know, or is not known by my associates.

I'd like to change that procedure and invite everyone to send in a response to the question that follows. My only rules are: write no more than 400 words (i.e., one side of a page typed single space; include a title, your name, your phone number, and your department; and have it to me no later than April 1, 1991. I may suggest changes, and ask for your approval during the ensuing week. If you have questions or comments, please contact me at the location mentioned below.

Question:

We have heard, and we have often said, how important it is to have a college education. With that in mind, other than courses in your own discipline, what do you think is the most important course a student should take while earning the college degree? Why?

Center Stage is published monthly in cooperation with the Teaching Resources Center.

Send correspondence and contributions to the editor:

Paul O'Heron
Mathematics Department, T-215
Phone : 771-5232
E-Mail : OHERON_P (All-in-One)

Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 1 Number 7 *April 15, 1991*

There are three things to note this month. First, five writers have written on what is the one course each thinks students should have before graduation. The opinions are diverse, in two cases oddly symmetric, allowing that the design of such a course is more of a personal statement than a consensus. I suppose that is good.

The second thing is to notice the insert from the Teaching Resources Center. The TRC is offering several workshops on a variety of topics. Some are quite specific (e.g., Tom Grace's workshop on taking information from the VAX), while others are good forums for general discussion (e.g., Paul Chamber's presentation on Moral Reasoning). I encourage you to look through the listings and make a mark on your calendar to attend those of interest to you.

If you have an idea for a presentation you'd like to offer, or you'd like offered for you, contact Alice McNeely (ext.5113, AT-011).

The third thing is the Convocation Day on April 23, which is devoted to cultural diversity. With everything that happens in my life I know it is extremely easy to lose perspective and adopt the parochial view that the world is the world around me. I see the convocation events as a way of doing a reality check. I encourage all of you to participate in some or all of the events that day.

Enjoy the issue and the coming spring weather. -- ed.

Contents :

A Course for All Seasons
-- Dan Dodway, page 1

Methods of Personal Success
-- Amy K. Friends, page 2

Literacy
-- Alice McNeely, page 2

College Degree: Summation of Courses or Skills? -- Debbie Spanfelner, page 3

Lunch at a Greek Diner
-- Richard Stoner, page 3

A Course For All Seasons

Dan Dodway, Mathematics

While there may be no single course that can do all things for all people, a course in speech comes as close as is possible. About 25 years ago the teacher in my speech course remarked that one could get a liberal arts education by taking nothing but speech courses.

For a remark to have that kind of staying power in memory, there has to be something profound about it. After giving it considerable thought, I'm inclined to agree with it to a large extent.

Since the medium is the message in a speech course, the individual students are free to explore whatever content they find interesting or useful. It is a course offering a variety of speakers who are enthusiastic about their material. As suggested by a sage, the only thing more contagious than enthusiasm is the lack of enthusiasm.

... the individual students are free to explore whatever content they find interesting or useful.

Sparking interest in a subject may lead to the listener pursuing the matter in a self-motivated and self-directed way. This is a goal for all teachers, and may redeem a short speech from its forced limitation with respect to depth.

More important than the variety of interesting content in a speech course is its process for putting students at ease and giving them experiences in making presentations. With understandable anxiety and sympathetic class mates, they develop communication skills which will assist them in job interviews, functioning on many tasks, and interacting in many social circumstances.

Happily, we are fortunate in having excellent speech instructors on campus who not only offer regular courses, but also mini courses. With video technology these courses are better than ever. In a recent interview on television Harold Sunshine represented the school very well, and highlighted the BCC speech program. The interested reader can obtain a videotaped copy of the program from Harold (T-230, ext. 5105). □□

Personal Success

Amy K. Friends, Student

In my opinion, the most important course a student could take is one that has yet to be formulated. The course would be called "Methods of Personal Success" and its objective would be to assist students in defining a personal concept of success that, hopefully, is not based on greed and/or the conventional definition of success.

At the start of the semester each student would be assigned several topics including such things as "How to find a job", "Define value", and "What is success?". The student would be required to research each topic using a variety of methods such as library research, conducting surveys, or interviewing people who have experience in the appropriate field. The results would then be organized into a short presentation for the benefit of the class. Presentations would be grouped by related topics, so talks on values could precede talks on achieving success.

In specific, each class might begin with something fun to break the ice and ease the anxiety associated with giving a speech. Perhaps jokes could be told, cassettes played, or a game played that leads into the day's presentation. This could be done "spontaneously" by the students, or organized by the instructor.

> Hopefully, the student would find that a person becomes a success through personal growth and self-actualization ...

Following the presentation, either the presenter or the instructor could initiate discussion on the topic. The discussion would enable each student to examine his or her personal reactions to the material presented, and to use that information remove personal misconceptions or effect personal change.

Hopefully, the student would find that a person becomes a success through personal growth and self-actualization, not through the acquisition of material wealth. □□

Literacy

Alice McNeely, Computer Studies

It annoys me when the clerk at the store looks perplexed when I give him $5.04 for my $4.79 bill, and I patiently grind my teeth as I wait for him to get out the calculator and determine my change. I'm perplexed that so many health care providers consume large quantities of caffeine and nicotine. But it's not Math or Health that really gets me, it's "English". I am repeatedly shocked by my students reluctance to read and inability to write.

Although I am a faculty member in the Computer Studies Department and I think computer literacy is very important, I think Literacy is more important.

I am aware that by making this choice I am by default, not choosing all the other subjects, and therefore offending at least 80% of my colleagues. Let me state my disclosure early. All of our courses are important, but I have been restricted to choose one, just one.

As the editor of this publication can attest, I am not a "writer", but I write. I've had jobs that required writing, so I started writing more, and more, and more. For the most part my writing has developed without formal training.

Perhaps I am biased by my own limitations. I am embarrassed to admit that I remember nothing about my undergraduate English class. (Well almost nothing, the instructor was a handsome, cape wearing graduate student. Was this small town adolescent so overwhelmed by Syracuse University, or her major, or impinging adulthood that she learned nothing in that class?

Writing is a tool. I write to remember things because I have found that once I commit pen to paper, or finger to keyboard, I tend to have better recall. I write to clarify ideas because I find writing a vehicle for thinking. I write to communicate with others because I have a vested interest in being understood. Occasionally I even write for fun.

> I write to communicate with others because I have a vested interest in being understood.

We are judged on how we communicate. Whether it is "socially correct" or not, assumptions are made about our background, education, intelligence and potential. Fortunes are won and lost by how well we get our point across.

It's hard to predict where life will take us. My path has had several turns since college. I would like to see all of our students acquire skills in oral and written communication. This ability will serve them well throughout their lives, wherever life takes them. □□

Quote

The professors in the academy say, "Do not make the model more beautiful than she is," and my soul whispers, "O if you could only paint the model as beautiful as she really is." -- Excerpted from Kahlil Gibran's letter to Mary Haskell, November 8, 1908.

Teacing Resources Center – Faculty Forums and Workshops

Week of April 15

Writing Objective Exam Questions
Karen Goodman
Wed 4/17 @ 4pm B-208
Thurs 4/18 @ 4pm B-208

Copying Class Lists from the VAX to your PC Grade Sheet
Tom Grace
Mon 4/15 @ 12 noon AT-106
Wed 4/17 @ 1 pm AT-106

Tom has developed a program which allows you to copy names and social security numbers into a spreadsheet for calculating final grades. BRING A 5.25 OR 3.5 DISKETTE FOR YOUR COPY OF THE PROGRAM. (You might want to follow this up with Using the Computer to calculate Final Grades, Week of April 22)

Week of April 22

Convocation Day: Cultural Diversity in The Classroom
Maria Santos
Tue 4/23 @ 9-11 am B-224

Integrating Moral Reasoning into the Curricula
Paul Chambers
Wed 4/24 @ 12 noon B-211
Fri 4/26 @ 10am B-224

A demonstration of how it can be done by brief in class experiences.

Using the Computer to Calculate Final Grades: Lotus Spreadsheets for Beginners
Sandy Wright
Fri 4/26 @ 9 am AT-008

Innovative Teaching Strategies: Supplemental Instruction and Team Teaching.
Rebecca Bennett
Wed 4/24 @ 3pm B-224
Thur 4/25 @ 11am B-211

Week of April 29

Using the Computer to Calculate Final Grades: Lotus Spreadsheets for Beginners
Sandy Wright
Mon 4/29 @ 10am AT-008

Coming in May

Video Disc Technology Applications for Liberal Arts. Professor Nancy Kaplan from the Cornell University's Writing Workshop, will share innovative curriculum opportunities available with video disc technology. The Software applications she shares will be geared to Liberal Arts but the presentation should be of interest to faculty from all areas.

To Register

To register for the above workshops/presentations (or to volunteer to present a workshop or presentation) please contact Alice McNeely via phone @ 5113 or 5022, E-Mail for McNeely_A, or via campus mail to AT-011.

The Teaching Resource Center is looking for additional faculty to give a workshop or presentation this semester and/or in the fall. Please contact Alice McNeely if you have something you would be willing to share with your colleagues.

Teaching Resource Center Registration Form

NAME:_____ DEPT:_____ EXT:_____

MAIL BOX LOCATION: _____

WORKSHOP TITLE:_____

DATE:_____ TIME:_____

College Degree: Summation of Courses or Skills?

Debbie Spanfelner, Library

Upon addressing the question posed for this issue of Center Stage, I automatically thought in terms of the important skills a student should learn while pursuing a college degree. While these skills include written and verbal communication, the skills which I have chosen to focus on for this article are those involving the ability to locate information and being able to critically evaluate it once it has been found. These skills come under the broader term of information literacy. According to the American Library Association:

> To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information. ... Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand. (Final Report, American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, January 1989, reprinted in Change, January/ February 1991: 40).

It seems that lifelong learning is one of the main objectives of a college education. Knowing how to retrieve and use information, regardless of its format, is an invaluable tool which is useful at any age and transcends every occupation.

The emphasis nowadays is on the integration of library and information skills into the course content. The New York State Board of Regents Action Plan has mandated that library skills be incorporated into the elementary and secondary school curricula. (Refer to Secondary Library Media and Information Skills Syllabus, Grades 7-12.) Bibliographic instruction on the college level builds on the skills taught in the preceding grades as well as introduces new skills taught within the context of courses offered at the postsecondary institution. As Librarians involved in instruction at BCC, we tailor the library skills to the class and the assignment.

> Information literacy skills are not only required for survival in our information rich society, but also serve to enhance the quality of life.

Information literacy skills are not only required for survival in our information rich society, but also serve to enhance the quality of life. This includes knowing how to locate information on such matters as buying a car or a major appliance, reading a good book and wanting to locate reviews written about it, locating a review of a Broadway play, learning more about a medical diagnosis, gathering information on a prospective employer, nutrition tips, and investment information. The list goes on ad infinitum.

One of the greatest gifts we as educators can impart to our students is the opportunity to be independent learners and users of information. 📖

Lunch at a Greek Diner

Richard Stoner, English

D.S.: Now that you've finished school and are working, I'm curious about what courses you would rank as most important for a student to take in college?

M.M.: Why your composition course would be first, naturally!

D.S.: That's a good way to flatter me into picking up the tab for this lunch, but I'm serious. What course besides composition do you think was most important?

M.M.: I'm serious too. There wasn't a day in college that I didn't have to write and read something. Now at work, that's all I do!

> ... but did you take a course that helped you become aware of other important skills -- critical thinking for example?

D.S.: Certainly, those skills are invaluable for everyone to learn, but did you take a course that helped you become aware of other important skills -- critical thinking for example? Did any course help you develop this skill?

M.M.: I'm not sure if I can name one course that taught me critical thinking, or at least that said it did. I know that some courses raised more questions than they answered for me.

D.S.: I would say that any course that raises questions or presents choices is teaching critical thinking.

M.M.: What course do you consider important for a student to take?

D.S.: Introduction to computers!

M.M.: I knew you would say that. Ever since you got a computer in your office and sat in on a couple of computer courses, you think that computers can, and

(Continued on page 4)

Stoner (from page 3)

should, do everything. You had us edit our essays on them in English, and I admit that editing on the computer helped my writing a great deal even if it meant more work with all that re-writing and re-thinking. Now, I use one at work to write with all the time. But how can you say that a computer course is one of the most important courses to take? Is it because computers are everywhere, and unless you become a Buddhist monk in Shangri La, you're inevitably going to use one somewhere, somehow, everyday?

D.S.: Yes, that's one reason, but I think that learning how to use a computer helps you to think critically. When you work with a computer, you become involved in a process which permits you to test your ideas because the computer allows you to change and experiment in almost endless ways. In other words, the computer creates choices for you.

M.M.: I'm not sure I see what you're saying. How can a computer, which requires so much exact commands and attention, create choices?

How can a computer, which requires so much exact commands and attention, create choices?

D.S.: Take an example from your own work. When you go to write an memo, you could just write it on paper and send it in a few minutes with perhaps a quick proofread. But if you decide to write it on the computer, you become involved in a process that asks you to make choices in editing, saving, and printing your work. Even the simplest program also offers functions that can affect your writing. You have to decide if you wish to take advantage of the program's aids such as on-line dictionary and thesaurus, word counter, and search and replace and block move functions. These tools invite you to edit and re-think what you're writing in far more flexible ways on screen than on paper; they give you the chance to think about the readership and purpose. In the end, you may choose to save two or more versions, each tailored to a different reader. The computer invites you to refine your work very easily.

M.M.: Yes, I can see how these functions help me write better, but, honestly, the computer tends to complicate my work rather than speed it up because of all these choices.

D.S.: That's because the computer asks you to think critically. Working on the computer makes you pay attention to what you're doing. The computer prompts you to make decisions on your work, but also allows you to see many possible results before you decide on one. These "What-if" capabilities make the computer a major critical thinking tool in virtually all fields. Theater students are using the computer to design sets and costumes. Because Shakespeare's plays are now stored on ROM disks, scholars are able to peruse them in minutes for key phrases; they then can study patterns and relationships among the texts that may not have been feasible before. Historians can combine data on demographic and voting patterns, and impose them on plotted maps to see graphically what trends influenced elections. The amount of ways that computers can help in critical thinking is limited only by the user.

M.M.: O.K., enough already! You've made your point. Computers are important in many ways. I still find them unfriendly, though.

D.S.: This is another reason why students should take an introduction to computers course in college where they can get to know the computer in friendly surroundings.

M.M.: Maybe I'll come back and take a computer course just so I can bother you, but now I've got to go. When I'm back in town to visit, please, let's go to a fast food place. □□

Coming Next Issue

May 15 will be the last issue of Center Stage for this semester. As this periodical has developed, it has been a goal to have a special topic for each issue. This has allowed each issue to represent a variety of opinions on a well focused topic, and hopefully provided the spark for discussion of those opinions.

I have been told, however, that the topics were not always to everyone's liking, and what about those writers who want to share an idea not related to "the theme of the month?" Well, this is an open invitation to all to contribute an article on whatever you believe is important to improving teaching at BCC, important to improving learning at BCC, or just important as a good story we can carry with us through the summer.

Send your article/story to the editor at the address below by Friday, May 3 and we'll be in touch.

Center Stage is published monthly in cooperation with the Teaching Resources Center.

Send correspondence and contributions to the editor:

Paul O'Heron
Mathematics Department, T-215
Phone : 771-5232
E-Mail : OHERON_P (All-in-One)

Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 1 Number 8 *May 15, 1991*

I hope you've enjoyed this publication as much as I have. Thank you all for reading.

The following is an excerpt from "The Tao of Pooh", by Benjamin Hoff, Penguin Books, 1982. I recommend it for you and your children. -- ed.

Hui-tse said to Chuang-tse, "I have a large tree which no carpenter can cut into lumber. Its branches and trunk are crooked and tough, covered with bumps and depressions. No builder would turn his head to look at it. Your teachings are the same, useless, without value. Therefore, no one pays attention to them."

"As you know," Chuang-tse replied, "a cat is very skilled at capturing its prey. Crouching low, it can leap in any direction, pursuing whatever it is after. But when its attention is focused on such things, it can be easily caught with a net. On the other hand, a huge yak is not easily caught or overcome. It stands like a stone, or a cloud in the sky. But for all its strength, it cannot catch a mouse.

"You complain that your tree is not valuable as lumber. But you could make use of the shade it provides, rest under its sheltering branches, and stroll beneath it, admiring its character and appearance. Since it would not be endangered by an axe, what could threaten its existence? It is useless to you only because you want to make it into something else and do not use it in its proper way."

Contents :

Improving Teaching and Learning: BCC's Interrelated Activities
-- Bryan Blanchard, page 1

The First Steps of Success
-- Alice McNeely, page 2

The College Experience
-- Ann Sova, Lynn Balunas, page 3

The Skill of Teaching, A Bibliography
-- Greta Wingate, page 5

Summer Reading
-- Librarians, page 6

Improving Teaching and Learning: BCC's Interrelated Initiatives

Bryan K. Blanchard, VPAA

From their inception, both Center Stage and the Teaching Center have attempted to become forums for the presentation of ideas on teaching and learning. Together they add an important dimension to BCC's academic culture. As their first year of life closes, exactly how they fit in and how they contribute is becoming more evident.

An effective model for improving teaching and learning necessarily embraces a variety of activities, just as it easily rests on the optimistic assumption that our best efforts lie ahead of us. One model which has been suggested by a number of observers includes three components: personal development, instructional development, and organizational development. At BCC, efforts occur in these three separate categories, as well as through the traditional ways in which institutions oversee educational practice. Since effective instruction embraces so many

An effective model for improving teaching and learning necessarily embraces a variety of activities ...

elements -- attitudes, strategies, motivations, and values to name but a few -- and these are the topics which draw the attention of department chairs, deans, peers, and students both in the evaluation process and in ceaseless conversation, it is likely that some improvement is always occurring in any healthy institution. But at BCC, something more is afoot and that is issue-oriented, interrelated development springing from groups of individuals within the college and their attention to a range of aspects of instruction.

This last year has seen many faculty contribute articles and opinions to Center Stage. Indeed, at one point the publication had a three-month waiting list of contributors wishing to share their ideas. The initiation of the Teaching Center has meant even more activity with its sponsorship of workshops on topics such as designing exams, supplemental instruction, team teaching, video disc technology and cultural diversity. All of these activities need to be seen in the context of an even wider effort, a context that expands the model for improving teaching

(Continued on page 2)

Blanchard (from page 1)

and learning through the addition of a fourth component, community development.

> An institution's assurance of quality, beyond taking traditional roles and responsibilities seriously, ought to include concern for improvement of individuals ...

An institution's assurance of quality, beyond taking traditional roles and responsibilities seriously, ought to include concern for improvement of individuals, the processes used, and the organizational structure. Adding the concept of community development only makes things more systematic and interrelated through increased individual involvement and expanded communications. On the BCC campus, community development has been greatly furthered through the efforts of the General Education Committee. As linkages among programs grow and perceptions of universal goals increase, their efforts are impacting more and more on teaching and learning. What has really been happening is that the ideal of a learning community has found renewal through the discovery of common academic purpose. Community building has followed on the establishment of issue-based interest groups such as the General Education sub-committees and the intergroup communications and negotiations which such a structure encourages.

Coinciding with the initiation of Center Stage and the Teaching Center have been General Education initiatives on critical thinking and the extra-curriculum. Workshops on infusing critical thinking into individual courses follow on the model of the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee's continuing efforts on behalf of the Effective Communication goal. Meanwhile the idea of using a theme each semester to build community and enhance relevancy seems firmly embedded in our campus culture. Adding to the mix are the Freshman Seminar pilots in Liberal Arts and Business and the Chancellor's initiative on Outcomes Assessment, which we have chosen to incorporate into both our instructional and professional development components through the link we see between assessment and the development tool of classroom research. This particular approach was recently recognized by SUNY Provost Joseph Burke, who praised the BCC Outcomes Assessment Plan as "one of the best plans submitted from any of the community colleges in State University." What he was noting was that our plan fit into our total development model. It was not an isolated effort, and this is what makes our Center Stage and the Teaching Center so vital. With improvement efforts emanating from so many quarters of the institution and a renewed appreciation for the value of a learning community, it would seem logical for an agency like the Teaching Center and its voice to draw things together and provide coordination.

The First Steps of Success

Alice McNeely, TRC Coordinator

We all want to be effective teachers. I believe there are two crucial factors that impede this at the college level: lack of a formal education in pedagogy and limited peer interaction.

At the college level, teachers frequently lack any formal education in the art and science of teaching. Many of us do not know how adults learn and how best to assist them in this process. No competency test or state licenses are required. It is expected that we will just KNOW how to teach. We often teach the way we were taught. Everyone knows what teachers do, we've had years of experience being students. For many of us that modelling has been our only tutelage as educators.

Remember your first semester teaching? Maybe you were fortunate enough to have a colleague with whom to share your apprehension, insights and successes; but the feedback I've had from faculty tells me that doesn't happen enough. We seldom get to see our colleagues in action. Our days are filled with planning, grading, instructing, advising and administrating. There is little opportunity for peer interaction, and what does exist, is usually within our own departments. It's hard to find out about the innovative things going on in the class next door.

The Teaching Resource Center (TRC) has been created by faculty for faculty. It offers teachers an opportunity to share their knowledge and skills and become involved in their own professional growth and development. Participation in TRC activities is on a voluntary basis.

The purpose behind the development of the TRC is to enhance the quality of the learning experience of students by strengthening teaching effectiveness. The TRC promotes excellence in instruction by providing opportunities for self-initiated learning to all faculty. We do this by providing a vehicle for faculty to help each other.

> The TRC promotes excellence in instruction by providing opportunities for self-initiated learning to all faculty.

In the November 1990 proposal for the development of a Teaching Resource Center at BCC, eleven objectives were established for the 1990-91 academic year. The TRC board and I have been given the task of implementing these objectives. As the semester comes to a close I have been reviewing them to see where we've been and where we need to go. It was a lot to take on for one semester and I think we're off to a good start. (A

(Continued on page 4)

The College Experience

Ann Sova, English & Lynn Balunas, Counseling

"So how's the... uh... the new course going?" Since COL 101 began in the Liberal & General Studies division in January, we have each fielded that question several times a week. Many faculty, both in and out of Liberal Arts, seem to have been aware that we were piloting two sections of The College Experience (even if they weren't sure what it was called).

Our answer to the question varied depending on what day it was and the degree to which our expectations had been met in the previous class. We both felt the pressure, not only of our own goals, but of the needs of our students and, not least, the sense that the whole college was watching us. "The president is going to want proof that this course is successful," we were told repeatedly.

COL 101 is the most recent manifestation at BCC of a national movement called "Freshman Seminar," an effort designed to ease the transition of first year students into the academic environment. Such courses typically take one of two forms: orientation/college survival courses which deal with negotiating the system, study skills, group dynamics, advisement, etc.; and academic content courses where students examine a common theme throughout the semester, using collaborative learning in a seminar setting. Business faculty implemented a course of the first type several years ago. A Liberal and General Studies task force designed a course last year that attempts to combine both types, building in not only academic survival skills, but thematic content as well.

> COL 101 is ... an effort designed to ease the transition of first year students into the academic environment.

The primary study topic for this semester was intended to be the ecological crisis, and we did give considerable attention to that issue. Through reading, discussion and individual research, students have considered the impact of human activity on the planet. Such issues as global warming, world hunger, energy use, pollution, recycling, and the environmental effects of a meat-centered diet have been studied. Cultural diversity provided another theme. Students read several articles on racism, attended the video "On Being Gay" and the speeches on Convocation Day, and wrote about and discussed how cultural diversity has affected society and their own lives.

The major theme of the course, however, turned out to be what we are calling "Active Learning." Classroom activities from the very beginning encouraged (even coerced) students into becoming personally involved in and excited about their learning processes. We tried--and in some cases succeeded--to get them to view learning not as something detached from the self, which one swallows without chewing, but rather as an engagement with ideas. "Active Learning," then, became not only a method but a subject of study.

Much research has been done on the learning process in recent years, and some of it can be made accessible to students. For example, all students can understand and respond to Paulo Freire's theories about education as a means of social control. They can recall many times when teachers have used this "Banking Model," attempting to "deposit" knowledge in their heads and then "withdraw" it at exam time, as if their role were that of passive container for a body of information. They know what it means to be passive students, and while they recognize that what has happened to them in those environments was not really learning, they tend to blame themselves for the deficit and have come to college expecting to sit more quietly and accept even more "deposits" than they did in high school.

Actually engaging with ideas, chewing them over, considering their implications, relating them to other ideas, even challenging them was a new concept, profoundly unsettling to some of our students, because it seemed as if we were breaking the rules--asking them to think, to react, to respond, to change not only their behavior but their image of themselves as students. In short, we asked them to realize that education is something you do, not something that is done to you by others.

While most faculty would agree that the objectives for COL 101 are noble ones, the jury is still out on the degree to which they have been achieved in this first semester. Frankly, the course has not gone as smoothly as we liked, partly because our expectations were so high, and partly because the course went into the schedule late, so that enrollment pretty much depended on the luck of the draw. Some students, for example, signed up for the class only because they registered at the last minute and were desperate to take a class--any class--that fit their schedules. They came in with little idea of what the course was about and less motivation. The demographic profile was another surprise: we had hoped for heterogeneous classes with a balance of age, gender and ability. What we got was one section of predominantly older female students with a few young males, and another which was overwhelmingly young males with a scattering of older females. In each class the under-represented group felt for awhile as if they had nothing in common with the majority of the group; that made it difficult to generate class discussions which included everyone. And in the predominantly male class, no one wanted to talk anyway. In retrospect those early problems seem funny, but at the time we felt as if we were rolling a heavy rock up a steep hill.

(Continued on page 4)

Sova, Balunas (from page 3)

Both sections experienced significant attrition, disheartening in a course geared toward improving retention; yet much of the attrition seemed beyond the control of COL 101 or of the college. It would have been convenient if our students could have checked their personal problems at the door, but they didn't seem able to do so, and were overwhelmed by divorces, sick and hospitalized children, being thrown out of the house, even getting arrested.

Among our remaining students, however, the consensus about the course is positive. They feel COL 101 helped them adjust to college not only intellectually but emotionally. The small sections, with an emphasis on acceptance and collaboration, afforded students the opportunity to vent frustrations and solve difficult problems ranging from strategies for combating test anxiety to getting rid of an abusive boyfriend. Class sessions were often intellectually stimulating, particularly when students suddenly made connections between the material they were studying and their own lives.

Class sessions were often intellectually stimulating, particularly when students suddenly made connections between the material they were studying and their own lives.

Our College Experience course was vastly enriched by a number of faculty who not only expressed interest and advice, but who actually attended our classes and worked with students. Doug Garner gave up a vacation day to take students through a fascinating simulation game on the nature of power. Duane Whittaker introduced them to the Fitness Lab and the importance of a healthy life-style. Steve Natale and Maria Santos worked with students on time-management and test-taking strategies--very serious concerns with these students. Alice McNeely and the Committee on Science and Technology introduced them to the concept of scientific literacy and its importance in a liberal education. Elsie Wager and Rick Firenze provided quantities of support and advice in planning class activities and in adjusting our expectations.

College faculty can seem to be an alien breed to first-semester students; through these visitations and through their participation in the Gulf Talks and Convocation Day, COL 101 students got a chance to observe and interact with the species in a relatively risk-free environment. We feel the "close encounters" helped to make college professors and academia seem more accessible as well as more exciting.

So the first semester was a bit shaky. Next semester will be smoother and more effective. Five sections of The College Experience are planned for the fall. Dave Sterling and Rick Firenze are joining us as faculty. We will be working together over the summer and throughout next semester to coordinate objectives, lesson plans, and out-of-class activities. "Experts" from the faculty at large will be available to deal with special issues. The course is being advertised to entering freshmen so that those enrolling will know what they are getting into and what they can expect to gain. By the end of the fall semester we should have a much clearer sense of the possibilities of COL 101 for BCC students. □

McNeely (from page 2)

complete report of the 1990-91 objectives is available.)

I have been pleased with the tremendous backing the TRC is receiving. I have encountered cooperation and support in almost all areas of the campus - Audio Visual, Computer Center, CAD center, Purchasing, Publications, Duplicating, Learning Resource Center, Institutional Advancement, Faculty Association, Maintenance and Administration. The college, especially the Academic Affairs office, has been very supportive of the TRC. A full time, release time coordinator position was established which will rotate among faculty. The division deans allocated funds from their budgets to equip the center. When one considers the overcrowding we are experiencing on this campus, the budget constraints and the closing of public school teaching centers, this support becomes even more significant.

The TRC was allocated space on the second floor of the Learning Resource Center in rooms 211/213, the former conference room and professional development library. The room has been painted and equipment ordered in March and is beginning to arrive. We have a telephone (x5354) and an answering machine. The Faculty Association has generously offered to supply coffee and tea for TRC functions. As soon as the furnishings arrive the you will be invited to our open house.

Faculty members have been enthusiastic in their support for the TRC.

Faculty members have been enthusiastic in their support for the TRC. Fifteen faculty members volunteered to facilitate TRC forums and workshops this spring. I was impressed by the high quality of their efforts and the diversity of their interests and skills. We have a superb resource in each other. A number of faculty members attended these sessions. All participants indicated they found the sessions enjoyable, informative and helpful in their teaching. I was encouraged by the interaction among faculty members from different divisions. Participants expressed the need for more experiences like this.

(Continued on page 5)

McNeely (from page 4)

The TRC has attempted to increase use of campus technological resources by providing faculty with information and instruction to expand their teaching capabilities. The TRC offered campus-wide workshops/presentations on spreadsheets, downloading from the Vax to PC and interactive videodisc, one presentation for the nursing department on classroom overheads and several personal consultations on the use of campus technological resources.

The TRC is now working with the Faculty Association to plan Fall orientation for new faculty. We recognize that new faculty members have special need for information and peer support. We are planning orientation as an ongoing event through the Fall semester. If you would like to be involved in this please let me know.

There are several objectives that have not been met this semester, but will be addressed in the Fall. Little has been done to connect faculty with campus resources, such as the Learning Resource Center, Publications Center, Computer Center, and AV Department, to enhance teaching or prepare effective instructional materials. The TRC has not established a mechanism for recognizing faculty contributions to teaching excellence. Your suggestions and ideas for meeting this objective would be greatly appreciated.

I hope you will utilize the resources the TRC has to offer and recommend ways that it can meet your needs as an educator. The TRC is there for you and its success rests on your involvement.

We took on a mighty project. I will feel more comfortable next semester when the TRC becomes a physical reality. I hope you will utilize the resources the TRC has to offer and recommend ways that it can meet your needs as an educator. The TRC is there for you and its success rests on your involvement. The TRC advisory board and I welcome your participation, suggestion and ideas.

The Skill of Teaching, a Bibliography

Greta Wingate, Library

This is a short bibliography of books and articles that discuss the skills that we use in teaching; often, practical suggestions are offered. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are available in the BCC Library.

"Decade of the Student; Universities are Rediscovering the Virtues of Undergraduate Teaching." NEWSWEEK 10 Dec. 1990: 71-72. *

Donnelly, J.P. "A Term Paper Project in Large Survey Courses." THE HISTORY TEACHER 22.2 (Feb. 1989): 117-124. *

Eble, K.E. THE CRAFT OF TEACHING. 2nd ed. 1988. *

Fines, J. "Teaching with Documents: A Personal View." THE HISTORY TEACHER 22.3 (May 1989): 317-324. *

Fiske, E.B. "How to Learn in College: Little Groups, Many Tests." NEW YORK TIMES 5 March 1990: I,1. *

Gullette, M. M. THE ART AND CRAFT OF TEACHING. 1984. *

Hilbert, B. "Finding the Call to Teach; Across the Continent and Home Again." CHANGE March/April 1989: 6+ .[experience of visiting professorship] *

Hoffert, S.D. "Toward Solving the Term Paper Dilemma." THE HISTORY TEACHER 20.3 (May 1987): 343-348. *

Juzzawalla, F., ed. "Excellent Teaching in a Changing Academy: Essays in Honor of Kenneth Eble." NEW DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING 44 (Winter 1990):1-118. *

Korobkin, D. "Humor in the Classroom: Considerations and Strategies." COLLEGE TEACHING Fall 1988: 154-158. *

Lyons, P.R. "Assessing Classroom Participation." COLLEGE TEACHING Winter 1988: 36-38. [includes performance scale chart] *

Megginson, W.J. "Problems of Community College Teaching." COMMUNITY COLLEGE SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNAL 4.2 (Winter 1981-82): 61-67.

Palmer, P.J. "Good Teaching; a Matter of Living the Mystery." CHANGE Jan./Feb. 1990: 11-16. *

THE PROFESSOR BUSINESS: A TEACHING PRIMER FOR FACULTY. On order for the BCC Library.

Reynolds, R.C. "The Long Walk to Room 114: The Realities of Teaching Remedial English in College." CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 10 October 1986: point of view.

Rice, P. "Grading the Teacher: How to Get High Marks." CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 7

(Continued on page 7)

Summer Reading

Lawrence Jenkins, Jane Rawoof, Deborah Spanfelner, Suzanne Sullivan, Greta Wingate, Library

The following books were recommended as favorites by one or more of the librarians at BCC. If you are looking for some fun or intriuging summer reading, take a minute and see what they suggest.

Alone After School, A Self-Care Guide for Latchkey Children and their Parents. Swan and Houston. Prentice-Hall, 1985.

Everything you need to know to determine if your family is ready for this. Feelings are considered - parent's feelings of guilt and children's feelings of fear and loneliness. HQ777.65.S93 1985. (SS)

Because It Is Bitter and Because It Is My Heart. Oates, Joyce Carol. In 1958, in a small town in upstate New York, a young black man rescues a young white woman from an assailant, whom he murders. That murder casts a shadow over and influences both their lives--he carries a burden a guilt and she, gratitude. From then on, their lives are intertwined, although they don't see each other often again. The book carries us through the pre-Civil Rights years and switches back and forth between their two families. I felt very close to these very human characters, through their feelings about and reactions toward the circumstances of their individual troubles. Basically character studies, the book was unforgettable. (JR)

The Burden of Proof. Scott Turow. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1990.

> The best revelatory mystery story I have ever read.

The best revelatory mystery story I have ever read. It is intelligent and well written. (SS)

The Cairo Trilogy. Najib Mahfuz. The Nobel Prize winner chronicles several generations of an upper-middle class Egyptian family, through the twentieth century. The story positions the various family members against the change, modernization, and cataclysmic events of modern Egyptian history and politics. PJ7846.A46Q313 1991 (vol. 1) and PJ7846.A46B313 1991 (vol. 2). (JR)

Classroom Assessment Techniques. A Handbook for Faculty. K. Patricia Cross, and T. Angelo. Univ. of Michigan, 1988.

Practical suggestions which come from teachers rather than measurement "experts", giving pros, cons, and caveats. You will surely find something here that you would like to try. FRR LB 1025.2.C757 1988. (SS)

The Encyclopedia of Bad Taste. Stern, Jane and Michael.

This book is meant to be browsed and is a must for your summer reading list! It talks about various fads, i.e., bell bottoms, troll dolls, and Elvisiana, just to mention a few. Written on the inside cover of the book, "The Encyclopedia of Bad Taste is a definitive source book for

> ... a definitive source book for collectors and scholars of bad taste ...

collectors and scholars of bad taste and a delightful compilation for anyone who's ever secretly (or not so secretly) loved the not-so-good, the bad, and the ugly in Americana." PN6162.S78 1990. (DS)

Holding On To The Air, An Autobiography. Farrell, Suzanne. New York: Summit Books, 1990.

Suzanne Farrell was one of the famous dancers in the New York City Ballet. Her autobiography provides insight into the character and genius of the famed choreographer, George Balanchine, who first had a tremendous impact on her life and work. It provides a firsthand account of the conflict between their professional and romantic relationship offstage. (DS)

In Our Defense, the Bill of Rights in Action. Alderman, Ellen and Caroline Kennedy. (on order)

A collection of court cases illustrating each of the first ten amendments to the Constitution. Each amendment offers a variety of interpretations which deal with such issues as the death penalty, gun control, and the right to privacy. (DS)

Joshua. New York: Macmillan, 1983. Girzone, Joseph F. and,

Joshua and the Children: A Parable. New York: Macmillan, 1989. Girzone, Joseph F.

You just feel better after reading these books, they are like written warm glasses of milk. In both books, the character Joshua is a modern version of Jesus Christ but he's not preachy nor full of fire and brimstone. These books make Christ real for anyone of any faith. Joshua, the book, creates the character and deals with established religion. Joshua and the Children is about northern Ireland. After reading these Joshua's you will want to give them to someone you care about. (LJ)

Life On The Road. Charles Kuralt. Putnam, 1990.

A well known anchorman travels the US in an RV looking for stories. His photographer catches signs: "No loafing after 10:00 pm. No congretating on driveway. Vialtors will be proscuated."

Kuralt gives advice to those about to embark on the road: Tell the desk clerk you want "Down and out, and up front." Every clerk knows that you want a first floor room, near an outside entrance, and away from the diesel refrig-

(Continued on page 7)

Librarians (from page 6)

erator trucks that run all night. Pack a Swiss knife, a large safety pin to close drapes that let in too much light, and a rubber sink stopper because so many drains do not work properly. Buy LARK luggage, the kind that expands.

You will want to start packing after reading this book. (SS)

Love in the Time of Cholera. Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Knopf, 1988.

This is the kind of novel in which you feel totally immersed in the smells and colors of life and love in tropical countries. (SS)

Mama Poc. LaBastille, Anne. 1990.

In the 1970's Ms. LaBastille travelled to Guatemala and studied the giant grebe, which lived only on one particular lake. This flightless water bird was called the "poc" by the Indians, after its call. She documented its behavior, and from her census, found there were only 80 left. The population rose to several hundred, through various ecological measures and government cooperation; then, such things as stocking the lake with bass (which broke the food chain) and sewage dumping, has rendered the species extinct. This is a sobering look at how the fragile web of nature can be disturbed so easily. Is it possible that Saddam's ecological terrorism in Kuwait might have similar far-reaching effects in the future? QL696.P586L33. (JR)

Mary Reilly. Valerie Martin. 1990.

A novel written as journal entries of the housemaid of Dr. Jekyll. As the mystery of Mr. Hyde deepens, the curious and perplexed Mary is drawn further into the very private life of Dr. Jekyll. PS3563.A7295M37. (GW)

The Spiritual Life of Children. Coles, Houghton Mifflin, 1990. (on order)

This is the book I plan to read this summer. It is a serious study of ten year old children's perceptions of God. I am especially interested in those views of children who have not had religious training. (SS)

Submarine Diary. Mendenhall, Corwin, (Adm. U.S.N., Ret.) 1990.

As a junior officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Mendenhall served on two submarines in the Pacific. His fascinating diary of several submarine patrols comes alive with the descriptions of fellow crew members, combat, and details of life aboard a submarine. D783.M46. (JR)

Take It Off And Keep It Off. Anonymous. 1989.

Based on the successful methods of Overeater's Anonymous. It describes the experiences of people who have overcome their problem of overeating. Appendix C contains a short list of suggested readings. A very inspirational self-help book. RM222.T35. (DS)

What I Saw At The Revolution. Noonan, Peggy. New York: Random House, 1990.

Peggy Noonan shares her experiences as a speech writer for Ronald Reagan and George Bush from 1984 to 1989. The author's style is witty, sensitive, and humorous as she writes about Washington's political bureaucracy. Ms. Noonan's frankness in describing such events as her first encounter with former First Lady Nancy Reagan is refreshing. Highly recommended. (DS)

When Living Hurts. Sol Gordon. Dell, 1988.

The author, a Syracuse University professor and renown lecturer on sexuality, has written many books on this subject for children, teens and parents. In this book, as in all his books, he makes us laugh and feel good about the predicaments that might otherwise do us in. (SS)

Witnesses From The Grave; The Stories Bones Tell. Christopher Joyce and Eric Stover. 1991.

The story of forensic anthropologist Clyde Snow. Highlights are the identification of the remains of Joseph Mengele and new techniques to identify the "disappeared ones" of Argentina. GN69.8.J69. (GW)

Wingate (from page 5)

October 1981.

Steffens, H. "Collaborative Learning in a History Seminar." THE HISTORY TEACHER 22.2 (Feb. 1989): 125-138. *

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Letters

Holding the Line

Margaret Deys, Writing Center

Recently, a colleague stopped to commiserate with me about the declining literacy standards required of students to attend college these days. A familiar complaint. Before he moved on, he added a vitriolic rebuke: "It's because of people like you."

As an English teacher, I am often erroneously perceived as a high priestess of the English language, charged with "correcting" society's deviations from standard English. Inevitably, the bemoaners cite students' problems with spelling, punctuation, and "grammar," by which they usually mean usage, as signaling the decline of western civilization as we know it. As Acting Writing Center Coordinator, I hear too many "if-only-those-writing-teachers-would-do-what-they are-supposed-to-do" sighs.

My colleague's rebuke rests on several assumptions: that people like me do not have "standards"; that people like me try to educate any old student; that people like me have no more expertise in writing theory and writing pedagogy than any other literate person.

Since others have expressed similar views, I would like to address these assumptions one by one. First is the assumption that people like me are not upholding standards. It's true that we do not assign the same value to a spelling error as we do to evidence of critical thought in an essay. Writing instructors have, for the most part, abandoned the skill and drill method in favor of more enlightened practices. However, this does not mean that we do not address basic literacy problems. Indeed, enlightened practices insist that writing instructors are not the only ones responsible for writing standards. Instructors in all disciplines are encouraged to reject poor student writing and send students to The Writing Center.

Indeed, enlightened practices insist that writing instructors are not the only ones responsible for writing standards.

Second is the assumption that people like me try to educate any-old-student. It's true. We enjoy diversity, in gender, age, class, and ethnic groups. We are, as convocation guest speaker Charles Vert Willie pointed out, "marginal" people, people who live and work between and among the arbitrary lines drawn by society. I believe that although every person cannot be expected to earn a higher education degree, all people (and our society) will benefit from continuing education. The primary mission of a community college is to extend opportunities for growth to all people.

Finally, the assumption I find most insulting of all is that all literate people know how to teach writing as well as people like me. The reasoning goes something like this. "I know how to write. I was taught in a traditional manner. Since today's students are not taught in this manner, they cannot write." This faulty reasoning undermines and devalues what I do. Research in writing has revealed that most of the traditional practices don't work, though some students can learn in spite of them. The research, which in part studies the behavior of successful writers, has generated a process pedagogy that has proven to be very effective. This pedagogy teaches students how to write and revise in a series of drafts. Inherent in this pedagogy is a "top-down" approach to editing. This approach insists that only after writers have found something meaningful to say and have wrestled with a structure to communicate that meaning to a specified audience are they prepared to address editing skills. Colleagues who have not studied this body of research do not know this.

I believe the strength of an institution like BCC depends on that precarious balance between demanding high standards of achievement and providing sufficient support for students to achieve those standards. As an institution we need to embrace the challenges of a changing society. In response to my colleague's rebuke, I wish to say, yes; it's true. It is because of people like me.

Coming Next Issue

The next issue will be out on August 15, just in time for the start of the fall semester. The topic will be "Why I Became a Teacher." If you would like to share your motivations with your colleagues, please contact the editor as stated below.

Articles are usually 500 words, but may be longer or shorter. Please submit a typed, double spaced copy along with an electronic copy on disk (ASCII format) or via electronic mail. Articles are due no later than July 19, 1991.

Center Stage is published monthly in cooperation with the Teaching Resources Center.

Send correspondence and contributions to the editor:

Paul O'Heron
Mathematics Department, T-215
Phone : 771-5232
E-Mail : OHERON_P (All-in-One)

59

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